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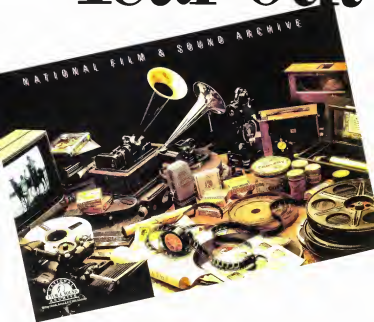


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Alain Resnais

Kieran Finnane (interview and translation)

"Fear of dying is also the fear of not being able to die. The fact that we cannot experience reality to its very end renders death unreal, and this unreality condemns us to fear dying 'unreally', not really dying, remaining forever suspended between life and death in a state of non-existence and non-death, from which our entire life perhaps draws its meaning and its reality."

"This fear of not being able to die is what religious have transformed into the hope to go on living; from this incidence of death they have made an existence beyond death—a transformation made possible by the ambiguity of this fear which, in becoming desire, tries to overcome itself."

"Only indirectly do we desire to know what happens afterwards: we want to be sure of death as being achieved, as a real and true whole, and that is why afterwards interests us because 'after death' would be proof that death, if not surprised, has at least well and truly passed, has been accomplished. We do not want a hereafter for itself, but, guiltfully, we desire to be able to look at ourselves dead, assure ourselves of our death by directing on our nothingness [...] a veritable gaze from beyond the grave. That is why love, in so far as [...] it is death lived in advance and known to its very

Director Alain Resnais talks with actor André Dussolier (left) and Ferns Andin

limits, is always afraid of its tomorrow, of its future, because it fears becoming its own awakening, this profoundly measurable moment when it discovers itself to be not finished and completed, but in its very end, incomplete, having never been that vast and interminable duration of what, however, never was. And that is also why love so often appears to death to achieve its completion, an appeal which is at the same time paradoxical, if love can only expect of death an unending incompleteness."

Maurice Blanchot, "Regards d'entre-morts",
Cronache, April 1967, No. 11 (Translated by K.F.J.)

Blanchot's words, written in quite another epoch and in response to quite another work (Michel Leiris' *L'âge d'homme*), are cited here not as a definitive interpretation but rather as pertinent reflections on themes arising in *Alain Resnais' L'Amour est mort*. This is Resnais' most recent film, part of the official selection in Competition at the 1988 Venice Film Festival and released in Paris on 5 September.

In the following interview, Resnais talks at length about his intentions and conceptions as the film's director. For those who wish to read it, here is a brief résumé of the film's narrative elements.

Simon (Pierre Arditi), who is loved by Elisabeth (Sabine Azema), whom he loves, dies in great pain.

Is it that Elisabeth's cry reaches him in the land of the dead? He comes back to her. Later, he will describe a sensation of being drawn back against his dissent, away from this means, this extraordinary sense of happiness, this light, these others, dead, whom he recognizes, each in every one. Elisabeth can listen to this language as close to the language of love Simon's closest friend, Jérôme (André Dussollier), a Protestant pastor, tells him that it was just a dream. Judith (Suzanne Ardant), married to Jérôme, also a pastor and in her youth Simon's lover and partner in a suicide pact, repeats the uniqueness of the experience of each individual and helps him discover, in second and other turns, words to give meaning to what has happened to him.

Elisabeth's joy at having Simon returned to her, her pleasure in their love, reaches a turning-point when the dream of acquaintance, or the dream of the disappearance of their love by embracing old age, leads her to desire death for them both, death as the means of going to the end of their love, extracting it from the impact of time and rupture.

Simon is increasingly troubled by his memories of his death. It becomes a virginal obsession. He wishes to die now. It is a private desire which does not include Elisabeth despite his continuing love for her. Excluded from his desire, Elisabeth oscillates wildly between her desire to be with him, as close to his experience as she possibly can be, and her desire to bring him back to life again, to their life together.

Simon dies, a second time and completely. As he is dying, he asks Elisabeth not to leave him. Her response exceeds his demand. She promises that she will go with him. They had been planning to leave together on a journey through Louisiana.

Simon is gone. Elisabeth hopes for a sign from him. She receives none and finally must rely on her own resolution, her own faith in her love. She prepares herself to die.

Jérôme tries to intervene. He declines his friends' faith with his knowledge of the truth and despair. He insists that Elisabeth has not the right to choose to die. Judith, who also knows her sons but proclaims that to try to prove God is to deny Him, defends Elisabeth's choice. She points out that nowhere in *The Bible* is suicide forbidden and that after all Jesus Christ chose to die for love.

Elisabeth explains to Jérôme and Judith that hers is not an act of despair, but an act of certainty and hope. Jérôme and Judith watch Elisabeth leave them; she disappears into the darkness. Judith comforts Jérôme with the words, "We saw her from the dead."

Is "L'Amour is mort?" you touch on subjects which these days are generally refused or avoided, a man returning from the dead; belief in God or in other absolutes, such as eternal love, the pain and loss of separation and death; and, finally, suicide. This is quite different from your other collaborations with screenwriter Jeanne Grunwald: "Mon sac de Némésis" and "La vie est un roman". In these films you treated themes not often in touch of as contemporary: the mechanism of human behaviour, education and so on. What led you to recast a story such as "L'Amour is mort?"

I don't give you more explanations for this film than for any other film I have made.

It was a string of coincidences. Before starting a film I don't have any poetic intuitions. I don't say that I am going to make a film on

such-and-such a subject. What I can say is that when I was finishing the editing of *La vie est un roman*, which is, I hope, a gay film, a film in which there are lots of smiles and laughs and a lot of characters, I had the desire to make a film which would be quite the opposite. I said to myself, "This time I must make a film with very few characters." But I wanted to continue using music, which interests me greatly.

So I thought that perhaps we could make a sort of "chamber" film, with just faces, very little dialogue and in which the music would continue the action and the dialogue, all of which would make it possible for the film to be short. I wanted to do 90 minutes easily and at the same time to transmit a lot of emotion to the audience. I wanted to make a film in which the music would have as much importance as a character or as the action itself, a film in which the viewer would continue or precede the action but in any case be completely tied to it, not as I had said it in my previous films in which the music was often beneath the dialogue and always accompanied an image. I wanted music that would be without images, without dialogue and music, music that would go on with the story without the participation of the characters.¹

Simon declares himself to be a "fascist". He has the form of a film pre-destined the characters and did not in the case of *La vie est un roman*. In *L'Amour est mort* you make a film in which speech and song are mixed, in such the music is very within the film becoming either a musical or an opera.



Arditi (Pierre Arditi), a Protestant pastor, and Judith (Suzanne Ardant), his wife and fellow pastor. Alain Resnais' *L'Amour is mort*



Elizabeth (Taylor) Aurora and her lover, Sean (Sean Connery) ... the most important thing in life is meeting the person whom you are going to love, with someone who is ...

And then, I wanted to make a film about separation. For me, the film is more about separation than about the heroism or about religion.

These are things which come about somewhat like ...

For me, for everybody I think, the most important thing in life is meeting the person whom you are going to love, who becomes essential to you. From the moment that you meet this person you live in fear that he or she will leave you, that they will disappear, or go overseas, or that they will die.

So it was with this material that the first images were developed: these were the first ideas for the film.

This love, as it is lived by Sean and Elizabeth, is a very romantic idea of love ...

Yes, I wanted it to be so. These days, it seems that a lot of films, though I don't see them all, explore the domain of crime and perversion. I thought it would be amusing to go and explore a less required territory: romantic love, for instance.

For me, a film is always like a journey. It always means going to reach out a little, that I don't know. Orson Welles once told something like, "I prefer making films in places which haven't been colonized yet." Well, romantic love is pretty colonized at the moment.

However, while we are talking about romantic love, one of the ideas for the film was to show that you don't have to be a mythical

hero, such as Tristan or Ishtar, to die for love. This can happen to anyone.

This is how Graham and I see the characters. Elizabeth and Sean are not exceptional beings, though they are not "ordinary" or "average" either. That would be portrayed. She does research in a laboratory and he is an archaeologist. They are not exactly "typical" but neither are they great romantic heroes. That was what interested me to show that anyone at all can despair.

I wanted to make a slightly contrived film, a formal film which could harmonize with the music as a violent expression of the sentiments. So, in keeping with this idea of exaggeration, the most extreme, the most irreducible separation is death. And what can provide great anxiety about death? Obviously, to escape it.

That is what I remembered conversations that I had had with actress Ellen Barkin. She had read about people who had been in comas, at a time where the signs of life had ceased to the point of their being declared dead by the doctors, and who had come back to life, always with the same story to tell about their experience.

There are two hypotheses: either they had truly experienced life after death — a very contradictory way of expressing it — or our brain is made in such a way that certain areas correspond automatically to certain images.

Today, medical science can locate areas of the brain with greater and greater precision. I have always found it disturbing to

think that it suffices to prick with a fine needle a precise point in the brain and, while the person continues to be able to see and while his behaviour in general has not changed, one dried has for this person everyone looks like everyone else. He can no longer distinguish one human being from another. The faculty we have to distinguish the four billion individuals on this planet has, for this person, disappeared.

So, we can imagine that in a state of coma there are circulation problems that produce quite naturally the same images and the same sentiments. But, in relation to all this, I haven't any statement to make. We will know more in 10, 20, 30 years ...

But in the film it seems that you are not concerned with explaining the "anatomical" of the coma?

The doctor says it can happen. Andrew explains it as an illusion.

1 From among the film, the author had the impression that the speaker was significantly asked to escape the complexity of the great matter that is scientific possibility. One has seen those dead in the speakers bedrooms and Elizabeth has died too. So, does the dead? That the gods continue to answer the prayer, is to be precise, not a case to believe in as there are others. It then goes to Elizabeth, who is no longer in the photo, but the audience has not paid her at all down. She looks at Simon already able to believe his in a situation of his death.

There is a breaking break in continuity declared in the editing, a moment over to single image in time which seems to say that the musician and the poet escape the "normal" order of things.

But Elizabeth thinks that there is perhaps a doubt, a chance. She will have to take the risk, even if there is only one chance in a million. She is intrigued.

There is perhaps another aspect to the film, which is our need to believe, whether we are atheists, agnostics or believers. We always have to have faith in something: in our parents, in politics, in art. I feel that we are constructed to believe. The film also turns around this idea.

But here I am giving you a whole lot of explanations, as if I were a spectator. When I am working it doesn't happen like that. Images come and then, with the musician, we try to see what they are, what sort of themes arise from them. So, we try to bring them together.

For me, a scenario never starts from 15 lines on the back of a postcard which are then developed, adding dialogues, and then, one day, you have 150 pages. Generally, it starts with part of a scene, a character giving a monologue. Often that is to be at the centre of the film or at the end. From there we add things and then, all of a sudden, it becomes something we can show to a producer.

At the outset, I never have what

4. With the role of my music. Because my film about what we could "say" about it. At the end of it, as a reason for believing that religion — Catholic, Protestant and other beliefs — was to be from its content that he did not represent ever finding it as a subject. However, he did produce the initial in Paul Cézanne, as there and in the world as an image that has not been seen, simply depicted.

you could call an argument or a synopsis. In this way I hope that this, let us say, "anticensorship" will manifest itself more easily. In any case, I haven't any choice. Even if I wanted to work differently, that is the way it is.

Did the 19th Century romantic literature influence you or Graustark, particularly the ideas about death as the means of attaining perfect and everlasting love?

No. I think we were more inspired by the accounts of people coming back to life after having been declared dead. This is perhaps what happened to Arnold Schoenberg in 1946, an experience on which he drew to compose "Friede", which gave us images and themes. And then there were what people who come back from the dead had to say. All that doesn't spread.

I also talked to a doctor, Jacques Gervier, who told me similar stories and who checked that Sandra's symptoms were plausible from a medical point of view. These symptoms are ex-

plained by the barring of an auracum. This causes intolerable pain, but an X-ray will detect nothing. Sandra would have had to have had it broken open but, as he refused to do so, it is quite normal that two months later he should again experience, though to a lesser degree, a similar pain, corresponding to the moment when the vein bursts and blood reenters the brain. Then death only takes a couple of minutes.

But all this is barely alluded to in the film. . . .

Yes. For me, this is not the point.

But during the film are there any mysticisms, illnesses, romantic diseases? . . .

6. Philippe Audi also comments on the 19th Century romantic' through several medical notes.

No mystery. His conclusion is medical intervention. The doctor never has power, he does not cure (but), he cannot change anything. In addition, to it another source was of his art. This could be a source of Sandra's return to life of his illness and romantic death.

The film goes on to make it his refusal of medicine but does not suggest it in any way. Sandra and Elisabeth remain in a state of the physiological reality of their condition, in fact, the opposite. The illness and death are lived to enhance of course medical knowledge of all the major problems the swelling the empathic matter to an extent which is characteristic of a romantic disease.



From left, with Audi and Gervier: A. Audi is met in a scene with Gervier

These romantic diseases were only mentioned because medical knowledge was not as advanced at that time. When Elisabeth died after the death of his sister, it must have been something of that order — he died suddenly, in terrible pain, with unbearable headaches — but his and his sister's illnesses were seen as mysterious.

To come back to what you were saying about the characters, Elisabeth and Sandra. They are not at all "standard" people, they are very surprising. . . .

You are probably right. The spectator is always right. I am just asking you how we are there, how we worked with them. In what way are they surprising for you? Their lives are very much everyday lives, calm, in the country.

Yes, but they were already attached to this world, rather different, except in the intensity of their love. . . .

I look as a model a couple whom I had met, when I hardly know. In fact, they live exactly like that.

But it is rare these days to proclaim such a love. . . .

I don't know. You would have to conduct a survey!

It is much more common to hear the kind of discourse proclaimed by Nora (Graslin Chaplin) in "La vie est un roman" . . .

Yes, but Graustark and I are sometimes of one opinion, sometimes of another. For this film, we let ourselves be guided by the characters such as they are, we allowed them

to come forth like that. We didn't push them. We tried to render them as normal as possible. We didn't seek to make them exceptional people.

How did you conceive the characters Jacques and Judith, the parents?

In so far as Sandra and Elisabeth appear to me to be more or less like everyone else, they are unobtrusive. But I thought it would be amusing to also have people who actually deal with the hereafter. Obviously, religious people have always been preoccupied by what happens after death.

I had memories of Noy, of Protestant churches so the Rivers which had struck me at the time as a sort of contrast. Jacques and Judith arose out of these memories.

I moved a very strict Catholic education in Brittany. But I don't like to think about my childhood and if I had put Catholicism in there I would have been bored. So, to avoid thinking back, I wanted to show to be Protestant parents. In this way, I would meet some new people and perhaps I would learn something. And they are characters whom you don't often see in films. We made the most of that.

Jacques is very respectable and understanding, so rigid and fragile in relation to his faith. But Judith is more complex. Her faith is synonymous with a generous and liberal love. But when does it mean to her to believe?

You would have to talk to some parents about this. I am not at all competent so answer.

What I feel about Judith is that

5. Philippe Audi in his history L'homme divin et mort (the two fundamental romantic ideas) comes to death. Our love death and money, death, death, death, the community of the hereafter. The other, as an order, this report which must be compared to the hereafter in a conclusion of what this love, it is a serious moment, here again. (Translated by K.F.)



Nora (Graslin Chaplin) in *Amour*. In his art as a romantic, a different approach to a different character



Juliette Binoche, Jean-Louis Trintignant and Jean-Pierre L  aud. "I thought it would be amazing to go and capture a less physical version [of the classic] romantic love, for instance." L  aud is a poet

she has a very real feel and that she loves *Jordane* for his certainties which calm her own anxieties. I can't tell you any more.

I believed in her. But a director is often not the best person to speak to about a film. He is too much inside it to have the necessary perspective and distance.

In my opinion Judith is very aware that, let us say, *The Bible* is the words that we are obliged to use when we talk about religion and, especially in 1966, only the crisis of something that we cannot understand. She believes in the mystery of faith. She is undoubtedly not very orthodox.

But I haven't yet been able to meet pastors who have seen the film. I know they are interested, that there is some controversy, though not about the authenticity or otherwise of what the characters have to say; they simply find it an interesting subject of discussion.

So the way in which Judith expresses her faith is your and Grushak's invention?

It is Grushak's, especially. I am only the director. As I have often stated, I don't consider myself an "auteur". I find discussing already posed enough problems without having to think about the scenario.[†]

[†] On this question of "authorship" one day in a film club an intelligent member of the public apparently approached Resnais.

You know, Monsieur. You made a film. You take the best scenarios, the best actors, the best moments, the best actresses. So, where is the merit?

Resnais answered: I agree there with you. There is no merit. (I) it is not in having brought them all together.

But you talk with Grushak about everything...

Of course. I have to. I could not, or at least I have no desire to, make a film of a novel or to use a ready-written scenario. I always tend to meet the scenario beforehand and talk. We talk about everything and not only about the film that we are doing. Sometimes we talk every day, sometimes every week — it depends on how the work is progressing.

Is it exceptional for you to work with the same scenario on more than one film?

I have made so few films that it is difficult to have a theory. I must have made only 40 features. If I had a principle it would be to change the scenario with each film so as not to repeat myself. But circumstances were favorable to continuing with Grushak. We got on very well.

I have always got on well with my scenarios, I have only good memories of them. Except that sometimes when we tried to do a second film together I didn't work, we don't know why. We meet, we start talking about the film we might make and then it happens that after the equivalent of half or two-thirds of an hour of the film it stops. We have to abandon it.

We never know when we start if we will actually get to a finished film. There is no certainty. That is why producers have to take their risks. They are very brave to risk to do a film without knowing whether or not it will succeed.

One would have thought that the collaboration with Grushak would

have given a certain unity to your work together. But, in spite of some shared themes, the three films are very different. "L'america" more markedly so by the absence of the contemporary world...

We wanted to make a film with moral themes. I fled from anything that could become picturesque, variously from anything that could date the film. Rightly or wrongly, that is the way it came to me.

In relation to the location, the place is strange. Where is it in France?

It is all set in and around the city of Uster, a small city in the north of France where the majority of the population is Protestant.

Everything was filmed where such a story could have taken place, within a radius of five or ten km — for economic but also artistic reasons. It was a pleasing constraint to know that we

Continued on p. 474



"Judith... has a very real feel and that she loves *Jordane* for his certainties which calm her own anxieties." L  aud is a poet



Philip Brophy

It becomes increasingly difficult to relate to social dilemmas, such as the school-yard stabbing and the Parliament poisoning, because the narratives are pathetic in that one is bogged into dealing with media depictions of problems which have already been generated by the media, by psycho-sociological rationalists. When interacting with the Media, the game is loaded and any actions of engagement, intervention, subversion or even analyses are delusions. Some people attempt to play the game for keeps, and statistics are dumped like dirt-dust-dross on top of the stabbing. X per cent increase in violent behaviour after subjects are exposed to violence on film or television according to latest figures from Adelaide University. More chapters in more stories — half chewed-up and spit out; horrific and unmemorable — are continuously calling up flimsy explanations that help keep spinning the dizzy debate of "Violence in Society" in the world (well). One gets the impression that people are too sociologically aware to realize that people are sociologically stunted, muzzling up the world as one big cause-and-effect, a place where everything has to have a reaction.

Scattered throughout London's tube stations are billboards put up by the Advertising Standards Authority declaring how fair it is and what its standards are in accuracy and honesty. And its most concrete example of no advertisements that should not be displayed: the promotion of Video Nasties. And it makes the claim in an off-hand way before it enters the delusive area of how the advertiser and the consumer should confer with one another. Perhaps they really are serious in England with all their smoking, still upper-lip about violence (even out of hand, citing the incredible rise in home video usage in the genre for this social dilemma). When the British vice squad confiscates a batch of video copies of *Apocalypse Now* regarding it

for *Cannibal Apocalypse*, though, one is reminded that hydra has power.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Australia sits relatively silent in the midst of a blood battle. Taking cues from English conservatives and American psychology, horror movies are being posited as the bane of education, the seed of social thought and the trash-can of cinema. But the Australian media has yet to devote significant space to exploitation films as the latest scapegoat for all that ills society.

In February 1984, the "X" rating was introduced into Australia and mild debate on the more legislative nature of the bill continues. Both the press and the public seem to hunger for blood as politicians satiate the crowd the issue. It only took Victorian Premier John Cain to recently intone what everyone had already stated in February 84: "We'll have to look into this more carefully" for many newspapers to attack pornography and obscenity in their editorial and letters-to-the-editor pages. Ten months after the introduction of the "X" certificate, the community is still in the same endeavor.

In reference to horror films, the "X" rating has not actually introduced anything "new". Not if public preview becomes too strong against exploitation films in general, there could be a back-lash against how much sex and violence is allowed in by the "R" rating, or

1 There was agreement at a recent meeting of the state Attorneys General that there should be an "X" rating to cover movies or printed matter "X" and then all films showing violence are explicit for an "R" rating, to be used. Tell the new rating is irrelevant, however, concerning it as a ratings issue. New South Wales will down the "X" rating and Victoria during January to 10 June 1985, so that the issue may be examined more fully. [ed.]

A hysterical story breaks out of the brutal theatrical execution of the three o'clock news something to the effect of 10-year-olds stabbing other children in an English school yard, citing some incredibly violent videos as inspiration for their actions. A politician in British Parliament condemns "video nasties" and tells of how he knows of videos that show eight-year-olds being tortured and teenage girls being dismembered. And, of course, the snafu-fiasco of each video fiction is incidents such as the school-yard stabbing. New news item.

Meanwhile, I am in Melbourne, those children fit with stab wounds in an English hospital and, for the life of me, I really can't make any substantial sense out of it all. The world might appear to be a global village, but it is more like a media supermarket where news becomes News, an indivisible, indelible block of information from a void, forming a dreamlike set unlike a land, 3-D postcard — flat depth. Movies or, moreover, one's appearance are probably a means to confirm that one is not as flat and one-dimensional as everything that inhabits the "world" one watches going by.

THROB

The Horror Films You Think You Know

Austriak seems to be not too baffled by pornography. Austrian culture has claimed it with a fairly liberalistic attitude, despite there being a sort of repression that makes the Censorship Board quick to point out sexual perversion in the category of "kultural chemismus" under the new "K" stamp. This entails all that one hears about, or finds out about, in American tele-features, news, child abuse, sexuality, etc. Also included in this category is the amorphous notion of "like graphic depiction of violence is relevant to explicit sexual activity". A perplexing problem arises here, is that the glamor-like status of sadomasochism as a sub-culture of sexuality is suddenly caught in an awkward position, because in related pornography has (like homosexuality) suffered the charges of demoralist sexual ideologues — and it isn't welcome. During the past decade, homosexuality has been establishing a relationship, on its own terms, with mass and levels of society which previously either ridiculed or were threatened by it. This is all in such an extent that the sexual stereotype known as the "gay" is now a viable character device in many American sitcoms, and even enjoys its own genre in film (see the Gay Polos entry in the Australian Film Institute catalogue).

In this liberal climate one might easily say, "Hey, some of my best friends are gay", but can we talk about sadomasochism in the same way? Perhaps it is the next step in the Sexual Revolution-Dance (previously known as the Sexual Revolution) as homosexual jokes are replaced by sadomasochist jokes.

The sadomasochistic feminism displayed in *The Beverly Hill Show* and *The Kenny Everett Video Show*, or the groups Deutsche Amerikanische Freischule and Freier Geist To Hollywood, is cheap, but it is its very cheapness which makes it so difficult to "disagree".

Society's wavering acceptance of sadomasochism is clearly mapped out by Mel Brooks from the humor of *The Professionals* to the bondage scenes cut from *High Anxiety*, to the tacky video-dips for "Hitler Kiss". Caught somewhere between pornography and pornography, sadomasochism remains a volatile, volatile subject.

Of great importance and relevance here is the controversy (of which Australia was quite unaware) in Chicago about *Friday The 13th* and the films that followed in its wake, as particularly *I Spent The Year in Love* (Steve Seidel and Roger Ebert proved to be the spearheads of an evergrowing movement of moralism in film criticism in their denouncing of "slasher" movies (i.e., films inspired by the success of *Halloween*) as *schlock* (schlocky) works and repulsive in their violence towards women. The death-ridged knife of such criticism is reminiscent on one side and pragmatism on the other — while judgments for art and society. San Francisco, New York and Los Angeles soon followed suit with the condemnation of exploitation cinema, despite there being no visible signs of a decrease in the films' popularity. It may sound obvious but there are two sorts of people who read this type of cinema: those who have seen the film and those who have not. These critical approaches (and the banner of sociological concern and virtue) do hardly anything to change the movement it creates nor reinforced devotion and no trifling script. So what, precisely, is the value of these public addresses when they only seem to be heard but never listened (at *Feminist magazine* in New York, with its photographs of grisly butcherings and captions such as "Rich, don't try this at home!!"), and the San Francisco Examiner-Chronicle's "Draw-In Critics".

possibly even the "M" rating.² There appears to be an undeniable confusion about the complex relationships between sex and violence (in horror movies, pornography, exploitation films and censorship) other than the superficial distinction that the U.S. is more concerned with the violent aspects of pornography, while England is more perturbed by the depiction of graphic violence. As for Australia, most might say that it is worthy that has maintained the comparative silence over the issues, although it is actually more like confusion. From misinformed pessimism in a Doncaster shopping centre denouncing that video depicting child abuse not to be let into the country (they are automatically refused classification) to a bookstore video shop doubting the life-possibility line for its most popular tape (*Brothucking Frenchie*), hysteria hangs already in the air. Australia is probably just waiting on an edge waiting for the snow to break the camel's back — or a school-yard stabbing.

² This has happened in Victoria where some pro-censorship campaigners, already outraged about the temporary withdrawal of the "R" rating there stated that they want the "K" classification removed as well. [Ed.]



The horror (Cinefantasy) of *Meat Zerk* is *I Spit on Your Grave*, formerly titled *Day of the Woman*.

Joe Rich Briggs, raving on his favorite drive-in screeners ("Maybe it was the little hand-on-the-toilet joke in *House on Sorority Row*"), both provide an appropriate tribute to the alarm bells of Sakel and Ebert. The tribute lies not in disparaging the negative criticism of any films, but in disregarding the ideological assumptions that indicate these criticisms.

In an enlightening and comprehensive book *Spoken Against*, John McCarty provides an unfortunate move in the defense of exploitation cinema in the chapter he devotes to the Sakel-Ebert controversy. By pretending that there is a social effect to their criticism, he ironically breaks down their argument point by point and furnishes empirical data to document their argument as a jumble of contradictory observations. What this serves to do is point exploitation films on the same level as the films which Sakel and Ebert's critics honor. A backfire is produced when attempting to locate types of cinema which are as opposite within the same value determined system, bowing to the power of hierarchical ordering and placement in the social evaluation of the cinema. The substance, nature, impact and effect of different cinema are valuated by everyone trying to defend "their" cinema as good, valuable, worthy, artistic, right, etc. Exploitation cinema is none of these and probably doesn't want to purchase those values. This is a very important feature which distinguishes it as a genre, or, rather, a contextual genre which many downtown modes of film cinema fail to perceive.

Seeing horror movies is undoubtedly an experience that can trigger a range of strong reactions, considering that being alone in these films does not afford an experience of any kind. Certainly the extreme nature of *I Spit on Your Grave* greatly influenced Sakel and Ebert's assessment of the film, though one suspects they were at least revolted by audiences enjoying it as they were by the film itself. When reading their reviews and statements

about it and other splatter and slasher movies from around the same period, I thought it was a typical knee-jerk reaction. But after seeing *I Spit on Your Grave*, I realized that it wasn't "that kind of film" at all, and that my experience of viewing it greatly affected my views on the "violence-is-society" debate.

It was the radio advertisement that did it. "This woman has just got, chopped, broken and buried live over beyond recognition." It has no jerry in America would ever convict her.

The plot is simple: a woman is raped four times in four ways by four different men, each one with the audience thinking, "That's God, that's the last." The women then methodically seduces the four men, one by one, and imperiously kills them by various gruesome means (garage, entrance, outboard speedboat motor, etc.). In comparison to a film such as *Leprosy*, it is a different planet. In *Leprosy* it was great when Margaux Hemingway blew the bulls off the rope in the car-park, the whole theater cheered, screamed and applauded. On the other hand, *I Spit on Your Grave* must be the only film I have seen in a drive-in during which no one begged her home. And at the end-of-the-atmosphere, normally the place where everyone is yelling and making each other, screaming "And how was it when that guy gets the hypodermic in the eyeball?", I was so quiet that all one could hear was the ringing of the cash register and the shuffling of all spectators. With *Leprosy*, the audience celebrated the drama of the rape as an action-packed spectacle, with *I Spit on Your Grave*, rape is portrayed as having no possible value through glorification, mollification or identification. The revenge enacted just did not compensate for the harrowing experience of the rape scenes. In contrast to the feelings of sympathy that it contains, *I Spit on Your Grave* is unconsciously blasé.

I Spit on Your Grave does not concern itself with political notions of the socialist

Top: James Earl Ray's autopsy in *Shattered*; Q, Leech, *Bloodsucking Freaks*; Above: *Spit on Your Grave* and *Day of the Woman*; film critics for *The Chicago Tribune* and movie-theater association of "Nigger" films.

metaphor of rape (i.e., by a camera, by a picture, by a camera, etc.) but instead open for a mode of representation devoid of the type of distance which *Pathology* (and *Not A Love Story*) lacks in its scenes. The better does the AFL circuit in Australia, the former into the director. Which is the more appropriate "use" for this social struggle?"

I Spat On Your Grave is one of many films that cannot be accounted for by oversimplified, naive intentions of how best exploitation films are. This type of film presents a density in its interaction between film and society that does not rest on social conscience (and criticism) or good-versus-bad dualities. There are equally problematic films, such as *Mean Streets* (1974) or *Delia's Dressed To Kill* (its codes of sexual identification are so convoluted they throw a real spanner in the works of sexuality in film) or *Summer Party Massacre* (and its notion of the "male subject" in a women's nude film — directed and written by Russ Meyer — about a guy who drags a bunch of co-eds to a remote house). These films are the precursors to these films: *Hirschfeld Gordon Lewis' She Devils On Wheels* about an all-girl bike gang called "The Men-cars" which goes around making up races; *Wes Craven's* first feature, *Last House On The Left*, which is an extreme remake of *Ingmar Bergman's* *Virgin Spring* (1930) and written by Russ Meyer. This, however, is perhaps, a grey area that lacks predictable, polemical focus on how one makes connections and extrapolations with difficult

films. This clamping down on, or censoring of, exploitation films can only stem from a targeted parental concern which will not solve any problems (positions that are not clearly articulated or delineated in the first place) but only create new ones due to their misguided directives and vague intentions. Film critics and sociologists alike should take heed of the two basic laws of the advertising consciousness reader — never underestimate or overestimate the public — and apply them to their flailing notions of what constitutes a "film subject."

Edward B. Wood Jr., the maddest genius that gave motion pictures from *Outer Space* and *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, has a truly memorable line in *The Slasher Uge* about two rock-hard urban cops who beat a pornography ring. A tax-payer (and confronts the police sergeant and chairman) says for wanting the tax-payers' money stamping out this-flicks and pornography instead of chasing robbers and murderers. His reply: "Show me a crime and I'll show you an image that caused it." The comedy of such social analysis continues 25 years later, but it is not as funny anymore.

One of the most striking features of horror and exploitation films is how clearly they appear to be typified as a genre. For a long time now, genre criticism has been at the back of the audience, backed by the bulk of criticism on one side and psychoanalysis on the other. And, as to the ephemeral realm of public taste, films

"these days" were more to the presentation of a unique object, a self-contained event rather than a genre example.

Watching a contemporary (and a post-1970) horror film, one can hear a talking in all other horror films, in the horror film since that time has constructed itself as a genre about genre — watching an own history in the making. It is this explosive and activating nature of contemporary horror films which makes them a more interesting cinematic exchange than the implacable, self-contained form of films which appears to shade such an obvious networking of comparison.

The private workings of genre are sometimes hard to perceive from an Australian perspective. Within the strange case of the *Mad Max* films. From the outset, there was no intent to differentiate substantially *Mad Max* from any other "old-time action flick" made in Australia, apart from a being drabbed with technical and classical in a tacky interpretation of black pornography. The overseas success of *Mad Max* must have surprised both those who did and did not like the film.

For Australia, such success poses an enigma. Many have thought that the films need further analysis, or that director George Miller really is a genius. But the cinema is essentially that many people have not been able to identify new *Mad Max* as a genre film, as a film that has a very specific relationship with many other films. It is this relationship, this configuration of language, that locates *Mad Max* and *Mad*



Top: *Anna (Newy) Loomis*. Above: *Laurie (Diane) Lee*. Center: *Lee* (center) in *Deadly Intent*. Right: *Max* (Gordon) in *Slasher*.



Top and above: Directed by George Miller. Left: Lewis' 3,000 Madmen. Below: George Miller's Mad Max and Mad Max 2

Max 2 (The Road Warrior) overtook, not just as an individual film by an individual director. Most critical reviews that endorse the films refer to this kind of phenomenon of an offbeat film within the mysterious realm of "cult movies" (see *Cinefantasies*, Vol. 10, No. 1, for the most accurate account of **Mad Max** in this respect). It seems that for many an ardent devotee to cult cinema, the **Mad Max** films, with their blasted art direction and stunted delivery of Aussie dialogue, provide a new slant on the quality and the grotesque in cinema. They do display originality, but only under wraps of genre (George Miller refers to **Mad Max** as a "Western on wheels"). The **Mad Max** cinema then is born of a strange moment: For overseas audiences, it is between genre expectations and the respect of postmodernism of Australian cinematography. For an Australian audience, it is between an apogee to the sub-genre of such action films (considering the European areas with which the production of Australian Film Culture is so linked) and the audience's familiarity with the modes of representation in constructing a post-holocaust Australia. Like the multiple car-crashes that fuel its fiction, the **Mad Max** films live a life brought



Images from Frank Henenlotter's *Black Cat*—wilder than *Fraserhead*

show by a contextual collision between genre criticism and auteur appraisal.

Within the organically expanding confines of the horror genre, one can easily cite a number of directors who display a strong artistic identity or hold (relative) importance or do both in the development of the genre. Those who are currently still in business are (in no particular order): David Cronenberg, John Carpenter, George Romero, Larry Cohen, Wes Craven, Joe Dante, Lucio Fulci, Dario Argento, Tobo Hooper, Jan Kojak. . . the list goes on. This, however, oversimplifies the industry of horror films as two-bit sausage, because the bulk of contemporary horror films (like exploitation films in general) exist by and for independent companies, be they well consolidated or virtually non-existent, and the economic structuring of their production in some ways differs from the workings of major studios, the latter being a picnic upon which the basic franchising of the horror industry sits. Producers, for example, are less auto-oriented in their relationships with directors. Consider the working bond between Carpenter

and Debra Hill; Romero's latent image and Larry Gross composers; Cronenberg's relationship with the Canadian Film Board; Craven's early days with SBC; Cunningham; Duggan's grounding in Roger Corman's New World company; and Fulci's role in making spaghetti spaghetti for American audiences.

The real star-system in contemporary horror films, though, belongs to make-up and special effects. These areas are immensely important in the attainment of those realism within a grotesquely unrealistic genre. The work of these areas includes the crafting of the physical weaknesses that affect a film's psychological involvement with the film's fiction, as well as the sensitive touch that they provide on mangle bodies in a genre that has as its sole concern the mangle of bodies. Stars are Tom Savini, Dick Smith, Craig Reardon, Tom Burman, Carl Fullerton, Rob Bottin, Rick Baker, Doug White and more. Even in a most rudimentary level, the horror genre, contrary to the image of it held by those who have not entered its depth, is an intricately constructed framework of many different elements and many different people's individual approaches to filmmaking.

The horror film belongs to a burgeoning industry. Having lived five years past its predicted death of 1978, it is a genre with a relatively stable audience (those who love horror films) which thrives in a context other than, or at least not totally entangled in, that of the New Wave of popular Woodstock-era-based-appeal cinema. This horror "vanguard" is Australian probably makes up the bulk of drive-in patrons and home video addicts, a market more oriented towards action in film than anything else. The "cult status" of horror movies, however, is more the result of content and audience than numbers, in the media or even the support the studios and distributors the name of city cinema work to a lesser cinema designation in entertainment as well as being affected by a general southern consensus of what is socially acceptable art. Logically, this means that films which only play the drive-in or do drive-in runs in the city are often too easily presumed to be irrelevant to any serious assessment.

Then again, things are not helped much by the self-inflicted bite that horror "buffs" lead, their appraisal resting on terms such as "so bad they're good?", "Z-grade cinema" and "cheap entertainment." The Golden Turkey sentimentality (inspired by the *Vulgar* chain via *Barley* film societies) is generally pathetic, as rated "buffs" seem usually to be able only to express their perspective (hatred) through giggling and guffawing at sarcasm, reducing all B-grade cinema to a cardboard facade, much as they do with exploitation cinema. It is becoming increasingly difficult to sort out the "reaction" from the "reaction" as cult-film screenings turn into battles between respect and derision for the film being screened. *Boyz n the City* 4 runs a series of films, such as *Boyz n the City* (author of *The Golden Turkey Awards*) who even ate types in soap, unfunny wire-jacks across the television screen during films such as *Boyz n the City* and *Boyz n the City*. The *Boyz n the City* 4 runs a series of films, such as *Boyz n the City* (author of *The Golden Turkey Awards*) who even ate types in soap, unfunny wire-jacks across the television screen during films such as *Boyz n the City* and *Boyz n the City*. The difference between laughing with something and laughing at it becomes ambiguous.

Rock culture has greatly exploited this area of the work of the over-growing terror of rock and film culture in general and, although a mob rule prevails over suchness here too, serious music has given this genre a real sense of excitement. The *Boyz n the City* 4 runs a series of films, such as *Boyz n the City* (author of *The Golden Turkey Awards*) who even ate types in soap, unfunny wire-jacks across the television screen during films such as *Boyz n the City* and *Boyz n the City*. The difference between laughing with something and laughing at it becomes ambiguous.

An example of how overexposed this area, that of the work of the over-growing terror of rock and film culture in general and, although a mob rule prevails over suchness here too, serious music has given this genre a real sense of excitement. The *Boyz n the City* 4 runs a series of films, such as *Boyz n the City* (author of *The Golden Turkey Awards*) who even ate types in soap, unfunny wire-jacks across the television screen during films such as *Boyz n the City* and *Boyz n the City*. The difference between laughing with something and laughing at it becomes ambiguous.

Add — December **CINEMA PATRONS**



Top and above: Michael (Paul Crowley) in Philippe Mora's *The Beast Within*



Video games devoted to horror are in the "big dipper effect"

which had anything to do with the first two and boasts an incredibly rich and complex screenplay by Nigel Kneale of *Quatermass and the Pit*, a very quirky low-key, post-holocaust, crapping-stomach film that skives how originality can be born of genre transposition. *Phantoms*, Don Coscarelli's first feature, released in Australia as *The Never Dead*, the title of which has nothing to do with the strange mixture of adult and child language, or *The Beast Within*, the best film ever made by an Australian — expensive or residential — director, Philippe Mora. And this is not even to start to mention all the under-the-radar gems that are not available through video here. As the score as it is, seek and ye shall find.

I only stumbled upon this difference in the contemporary horror film when a friend gave me a free pass to the Melbourne preview of *Friday the 13th*. The invitation card was so tacky: a very bad illustration of an axe cutting down on an empty bed with axe-bladed blood (the worst way to depict blood) spouting all over the place. A mere would-be in attendance, I said, and if I survived the film I would receive a certificate of survival. I am hooked. The night comes — it actually was Friday the 13th — and a whole pile of free-loading looters like myself file into the cinema. There is a panic at the door. Everyone is jangling and snarking at the cheap ticket — and leaving them. Inside the cinema, the lights go out and a voice announces that there is still time to leave if anyone wishes to do so.

The film starts, and from the flash back prologue is tasteful slow motion to the exploding credits, to the establishing of truly revolting apple-pie kids (not unlike Australian physical education students), the film spells disaster. The audience was sent to find out that they would carry a new meaning in these films.

Within five minutes, the audience thinks it has encountered the central character who will suffer the film's terror at the mercy of any one of three possible lunatics. Wrong. Just when the audience thought it had the film nailed out, the "central" character is chased through a forest and, devoid of any real suspense, has his throat slit. Her corpse opens the audience's aid, as it tries to figure out the next, her throat trickles a little blood and then falls open, nothing out gushes. Dissolve stage and fade music.

In a remarkably subtle gesture, this film has just depicted its audience into a void of meaningless clichés, clichés that do not even

carry the very meaning upon which their nature as clichés rests. These clichés, as monsters, are not simply caught; they are possessed by a music, anarchic force working on an amiable effect. Sifting through the visual dimensions, one finds that just as every person on-the-street in the potential lunatic and just as every character in the plot is the potential potential murderer, so too is every cinematic cliché the possible offender of a shock from the helpless audience. A third of the way into *Friday the 13th* the audience was one, one body being poked, poked, poked or failed, there were no identification process and no narrative suspense, the film actually offered us a new nothing. In short, it was attacked. Everyone left the theatre giggling nervously — nervously, because our nerves were a wreck.

Contemporary horror films are about this type of cinematic experience. It is the authentic of the "big dipper effect" — a physical sensation brought about by an unsettling of actual stability that induces pleasure — the thrill of it all.

Wizard Video company markets two video games: *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (the first violent video game) and *Halloween* (the game in which he cannot leave). Without doubt, these games are hitting in on the "big dipper effect". As games, they afford the same experience as the films they honor. This is the cry of the contemporary horror genre: that producers and psychotic in their purpose, perfection in their focus, music in their deployment, inviolable in their effect. They can capture an addiction beyond rationalization, because (in a sense) they manipulate the nervous system more than the brain, and excites more than emotions, evoke fears more than opinions, ravage bodies more than imaginations. One might call this an abuse of the cinema. I simply call it the cinema. ■

The major factor which deteriorates the mis-understanding of the contemporary horror film is its nature as a second degree game. Many people think that recent gory films are the same, old, bad-on-the-face-kind, nihilistic-subjective-nature-thing: screaming wailing snarl, but with 10 times more fake blood and some sexual cannibal thrown in. The fact is that the nature of these films is unique and specific, and not simply a re-exploitation of cinematic codes. Their complex relationships with the police, catharsis, society, the family, religion, the photographic, the body, humor, theater, sexuality, etc., have very little to do with any previous historical phase of the genre. One only has to take an in-depth look at *Howard Blake* and John Carpenter's versions of *The Thing* as evidence of a personal dedication of two poles of cinematic horror.

Brian McKenzie

The cinéma vérité documentary, in its purest form, is capable of simulating 'real life' without the contrivances of a spoken narration, a fixed script or even detailed structural planning.

But for this freedom, a price must be paid: a cinéma vérité documentary requires a high shooting ratio, a large budget, comprehensive camera 'coverage' and the ability to creatively develop the film during the editing process.

*It is all the more surprising then to discover that Brian McKenzie, who has directed two of Australia's finest cinéma vérité documentaries, had little or no knowledge of camera coverage until after completing the first of these films, *A Winter's Harvest* (1986).*

*In a concise 37 minutes, *A Winter's Harvest* details the traditional food preparation rituals of a group of Calabrian*

immigrants, resident in a barren outer Melbourne suburb. The film methodically follows their slaughter and processing of a pig into assorted salamis and other meats for the winter.

*McKenzie's precise and exact camera direction complements the balance, pace and rhythm of the film, giving no clue to the director's instinctive and intuitive approach. *A Winter's Harvest* is drawn out of centuries of Calabrian peasant life and its timeless quality is reminiscent of Ermanno Olmi's recent fictional films.*

In fact, the Italian milieu is so strong that audiences can only locate the film through occasional glimpses of a can of Foster's beer, or the odd perfunctory comment about VFL football.



McKenzie's second and more ambitious excursion into cinema verité is *I'll Be Home For Christmas* (1983), a film which more clearly displays the director's struggle to resolve his intuitive technique with the need to achieve sufficient coverage.

In this new film, McKenzie delves into the world of homeless men: the 'lifers' who have staked out their turf in Melbourne's parks and gardens, sleeping in rubbish bins and nearby hostels, and meeting daily over wine bottles to fight, argue, laugh, ruminate and spit yarns to each other.

Unlike the Calabrian film, in which McKenzie focused on the workings of a village production line, *I'll Be Home For Christmas* searches intently for the underlying humanity that binds this group together. Through this, the film manages to show the self-trust, intelligent and insightful world created by the camaraderie of these men. Despite their chronic alcoholic haze, or perhaps because of it, these homeless men have a clear and penetrating understanding of their social position.

Disposed, but at the same time patronized by the rest of society, these homeless men are unwittingly immersed in our liberal sympathy, and yet are not drowned by it. We take a certain solace in this, our curiosity tempered by our desire to keep them at arm's length — this fallen, degenerate minority on whom we can bestow our darkest fears.

The following interview with Brian McKenzie was conducted by filmmaker Chris Warner.

Red Reelers

I have always been attracted to blabbers who hang around pigsties. Their situation is an incredible affront to our civilization: everyone else is christened and bourgeois and traffic, whereas these blabbers just ramble through bus, drunk and mean, and azzle and cress the way they do. It totally denies any one else's sense of modernity. I used to hang around, making photographs of them from a distance and then I got up enough courage to start chatting to them. I realised there was a pattern and access in their sub-culture. I became involved in the course of the community, the way they did things, how they got their food, where they stayed, what they did if it was a sunny morning.

This film is about a community of men who are living right in the middle of things but who are totally outside everything. I wanted to represent them in a genuine way, in a way that gave them a degree of dignity and, hopefully, provided a means whereby people could understand how they related to the rest of the world. I wanted to confront people with the idea that things are desperately wrong when there are poor blabbers who live like that. And it is not a matter of "it's their fault", it is a matter of how cruel our world is. That is what I was originally leading towards, and that is what I think it ended up being.

I started filming with Dave and

Steve when I had originally asked if they wanted to make a film. I always saw them as the key to the group so master how as composition I wanted, they were the first people I shot. But soon after that Steve disappeared, so we never knew where he went. Most of those early guys weren't in the latter part of the film, just Dave who continued right through to the end.

After a while, the rest of them began to drift out. I had been around for a long time and they understood to some degree what I was saying when we talked about things such as families, jobs and so



John Charters (right) and Brian McKenzie (camera) film three homeless men for *I'll Be Home For Christmas*.

on. Over the period of the filming, I developed fairly strong attitudes to what I thought their relationship with the rest of our society was, and the film tended to change somewhat. Now it has probably gone back to the way I initially planned it, so that I am not imposing as many of my ideas as I had planned to do.

At one stage, Dave talks about his having been an accountant but the idea of him going back to bring one just seems ridiculous. Dave was really living his life more than any accountant ever would. I would feel more sorry for him if he returned according to the expectations of our society than if he continued the way he is now.

After you started the first filming in 1981, were you filming regularly or just at weekends after work?

I didn't film much in the first year. I wasn't sure enough then in myself to film and my life was pretty demanding. I had a job and a child and had just moved into a house. I also had ambitions to make a feature which I had started

writing while I was teaching in a school in the western suburbs. So my attention was somewhat divided, which I didn't mind, I knew that I could not make this film in a hurry anyway.

What sort of work have you been doing in between making the film?

When I left Teachers' College I did a lot of teaching and drove taxis to support myself, and when I finished A Winner's Harvest I got a job for a year in an English teacher in a technical school and then, for a year, at Rusden Teachers' College. Since then, whatever I need to earn money, I drive taxis.

What sort of crew were you using?

Initially it was just me. I would take a Nagra and a still camera. I felt insecure even though I had done so much documentary photography. Then, when I married Fiona, I had this complex about being impoverished and never doing anything properly. I used a crummy camera and I had a friend who had never sound recorded before. I asked him if he would do the sound recording, simply because I thought he was gentle enough and nice enough to film me. I thought he would listen and we would go it together. But neither of us did a good enough job.

I wasn't prepared to hire a professional recorder and take him into a situation in which I had developed trust and understanding with the men. But it was just for the making a project in film that sort of situation. I really needed to have a sound recording with me all the time, so I discovered what was going on, whether or not I was shooting. Once I started using a good camera and super speed lenses, everything started to work much better. That is what John Charters, who was a natural radio-kick.

John first shot with me in November 1982. He was trained as



The homeless port dwellers of Brian McKenzie's *I'll Be Home For Christmas*.



Cabellini designs the chapter and prologue sets for *Winter's Harvest*. Brian McKinnon is *A Winter's Harvest*

the Australian Film and Television School and was used to everyone filming on a tight two-shot. I shot much wider, so he kept getting in the way. I was always talking him to fuck off one of the frame. But he didn't mind. I think he really loved it. He appreciated what was going on and he really liked the way. They liked him, too. The only trouble was that he would go off to Sydney all the time.

Does trust and understanding determine the kind of film you make?

It would be fairly impossible if you just started blowing away with cameras, with the bushes not really being aware of you. There wouldn't be any point to it really, you would make a totally different sort of film. And you would have to be a totally different sort of person to want to do that.

How do you feel about the extent to which you manipulate yourself reality when you are filming and the extent to which people you are filming understand what has been done to them?

Different filmmakers approach it in different ways. I have never had many moral qualms about what I do when I make documentaries. At times, I have felt very

awkward and have been unable to cope with what is happening, so I haven't done a shot. Then, later, I reported that I didn't have as much trouble as I could have had. Mind you, I have probably got more than most people in those sorts of situations.

In terms of affecting the reality of the shoot, all filmmakers and all documentary filmmakers do that in various degrees. There has to be some respect for and some identification or acknowledgment of that in your film.

What about organizing or constructing what you are shooting?

I don't do much of that. Occasionally, I will put up a light and feel as if I am imposing. I usually stop shooting then. If I think I am not wanted, I usually won't shoot. Other documentary filmmakers, such as 60 Minutes, is very manipulative and exploitative, but it is leaders. In my films I have always subordinated the process and I probably affect the reality to a minimal degree. If I thought I had a detrimental effect on people, I wouldn't do it. Usually, it is just the opposite, it is a productive thing in which people like to become involved.

Do you prefer documentaries to drama?

making films. I think I am quite good at it and I am always working through my ideas about what is going on. So documentary is very natural for me in many ways.

Most filmmakers perceive drama as being the ultimate. Mind you, all the modern constraints — tax investment and so on — because such an impenetrable film drama doesn't have as much free form as creative cinema. Ideally, it is complete freedom because there is nothing but pure ideas which you have to form into a finished piece. Most filmmakers, no matter in which area they work, harbor the thought that one day they would like to have a bath in putting everything they think or believe in a film and doing it right from scratch. I know I certainly would like to do that too.

The style of *I'll Be Home For Christmas* is very much what used to be called cinema verité. You have a camera and a sound recorder and you follow what is happening. That seemed to be as much a conscious decision as something that came out of the circumstances under which you were filming. But then there were very few or no cut-aways in these scenes. Was that a conscious decision not to shoot there?

I have always done things that way. In *A Winter's Harvest*, it was all cinema verité except that we worked out what the sequence of events were and when they would happen with everyone. When we were filming, the important thing was not just the sequence and the process, it was the people's relationships with the process, their sense of consciousness and all the cultural and political things that come out of it, and their behaviour and nature that it captures verité.

It is the same with *I'll Be Home For Christmas*. I have no interest



Johnny Collins. Right: After the sequence of a pond in the park during his day of drinking *I'll Be Home For Christmas*



Peter Wilson sits on a cricket equipment box in Revere Park. The box is frequently used by American men for sleeping in. *I'll Be Home For Christmas*

in constructing a film around a theory or a story. I have never been involved in thinking along those traditional lines, not because I have a subject or anti-traditional stance but because I have never been trained or brought up with a group of filmmakers. For example, I didn't have the word "coverage" in my vocabulary until I sat in Bangkok and went on the shoot for *The Plains of Heaven*, where that was everyone's second word. So I started understanding what it was but, before then, I never realized you even needed it. Generally speaking, I have an intuitive attitude towards my work.

Throughout *"I'll Be Home For Christmas"* there is a strong sense of the man caring for each other and of a little society that has its support structures. Are these people aware of, or do they understand, the effect that a documentary about them which is shown on television can have on their lives?

From one shot to the next I had to ask permission of the man who was there. Often, people did not want me to film them — it became obvious by their behavior — so I would have to make the decision whether to shoot or not to shoot. It's that believing that what I was doing was not counter-effective.

When some of the men would talk about their concern about being in the film, I would explain to them what I was doing. I made a commitment to a few men that the film would never be screened on Australian television. I had to make that decision anyway because so many of them perceived television as a threat. Cinema, however, was not a threat to them.

Once the initial relationship between us was established and they worked out that I was all right, they just wanted to tell me things,

they just wanted to tell me that they needed love. I suddenly became confronted with all these blokes who wanted to tell me, "We went to the Vietnam war, and now look at the Vietnamese all around us." These blokes see themselves as being incredibly exploited. They went to Vietnam, they thought they did the right thing, they came back and they are nothing but petty criminals in and out of jail all the time. They are so 'mashed' and 'aggre', and they have been trained so by that way. They are frustrated; they have no means of expressing what it is inside of them that makes them so unhappy, or of expressing what has happened. As fingered, "No one was there to protect us"; it is a pretty easy line about people coming back from war but they were disappointed. It was a disaster what happened in Vietnam. So these blokes came back with their war injuries and their problems and no one wanted to know about them. And here I was with video they saw as a television camera. I was a dinner to tell someone and so they did.

The underlying philosophy which I came to eventually, was that the less you had the more I enabled you to be caring about people. I felt most at home with those blokes — disenchanted, got nothing, nothing to be proud of, nothing to compete with and nothing to lose — and they were much more welcoming to me than most people in these situations. I find their company so much more refreshing, so much more humane and gentle, than if I go into a social or professional situation in which everyone is playing their cards close to their chest and watching out for themselves. No one is really being honest or open.

I just hoped in the end I would present this film and that people could reflect on it. What has



Frank Parry, a classic white devils' identity dependent on language and environmental factors. *I'll Be Home For Christmas*

happened to people's sense of alienation? How has it been raised over the years? Why have people become hostile and inhospitable to each other?

What was the reason for including the scene with Paul Mahua?

So much of modern work is dependent on other people's misfortune, whether it be working as an executive company, as a hospital or as a social worker. We develop ways of coping with each problem without really questioning what is wrong in our world, in our attitudes. That is what Paul Mahua represents: everyone's complicit misrepresentation of other people's tragedies. I am trying to suggest that we are all implicated. The entire you become successful, get a wage or do anything besides doing nothing, you are implicated.

What do you do once you realize you are implicated by the situation of these homeless men?

People should continue to re-evaluate what they are doing every moment. I don't think you can be a revolutionary. You can go and live in Bangkok, but I am not prepared to do that. Given our sophistication, education, culture and history, it is totally unreasonable to expect that you are going to change people to that degree. That is why I think films about urban terrorism are a little misguided — witness pieces of bourgeoisie activity fakelike. All you can hope for is that, like many people who are not trying consciously to think you up, you constantly re-evaluate what you mean to the person next to you, and whether the work you are doing should be done at the first place.

How do you feel about being a filmmaker and the life that goes with it?

On some levels I really like it. I probably enjoy making films more than a lot of my peers. I don't

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Picture Preview

Niel Lynne



Above: *Niel* (Paul Williams) and Marlon (Alan Cline) are tied in discussion only after a mass murder spree. Below: *Niel* and Ferdinand (Nigel Thomson) over the outcome of *Niel*'s shooting trial

Niel Lynne is the story of two boyhood friends, tracing their fates and loves from the turbulent era of the late 1960s to 1980

Niel Lynne is directed by David Baker, for producer Tom Hurstall, from a screenplay by Baker and Paul Davies. The director of photography is Bruce McNaughton, the sound recordist Phil Surling, the editor Don Saunders. The film stars Sigrid Thornton, Paul Williams, Brandon Barker, Judy Morris, David Argue, Tony Rickards, Nicki Paull, Alan Cline, John Howard and Merv Redshaw.

Opposite page: *Niel* was born rap. *Niel* is depicted comparing an anonymous letter to his cousin Francis (Alan Cline) in *Niel*'s (David Baker) studio. *Niel*, Tom (Tony Rickards) and Francis (Alan Cline) are tied in their way to the shooting newspaper which *Niel* kills. *Niel* meets a young girl (Nigel Thomson) who becomes his first love. *Niel*, an anonymous party (Tony Rickards) in *Niel*'s (David Baker) studio. *Niel* meets a woman (Judy Morris) who becomes his first love. *Niel* meets a woman (Judy Morris) who becomes his first love.





Film Festivals

41st Mostra del Cinema, Venezia, 27 August - 7 September 1984

Vikki Riley

For my director, the opportunity to be represented at the Venice Film Festival must be seen with equal statements of fear and anxiety. Known for its artistic and theoretical inquiry (whereas Cannes is often criticised for lack of it), Venice is a crucial testing ground which demonstrates a film's success outside the festival circuit. A hybrid offer with its fair share of glitz and glamour and mixing with its avant-garde style and politics, it can become, through its evaluation, a festival which proposes to construct paradigms of "good taste".

In last year's Festival aimed at introducing the natural beauty in a vast, grand, sprawling, five-screened circuit of de-synchronisation and heterogeneity, then this year the emphasis shifted further to the director's responsibility for content and cinematography. Seen from an international perspective, the level of discussion followed a course of grappling with contemporary issues of politics, feminism and economics, which from the first week set the tone for the strategicality of the Festival in a tight, male, fascist, to which the films reflected social concerns.

For the Italian, the problem of new technology (i.e., television film distribution) was at the forefront of discussion in this year's Festival was used to promote the rising Italian film industry (the Summer almost half of Italian's cinema closed down), accounts for the large number of Italian films in the competition section — in all, as opposed to only one from the U.S. ("The Festival can't help it if Hollywood didn't make any good films this year"), made the Festival's director Gian Luigi Rossi.

Rossi also expressed the desire to bridge the gap between film and television, and to establish a flow of interchange between the two media, which could be achieved by remembering the value of Cinema as Art, which the good poetry could transcend any problem between the credibility of its audience. Hence the real conflict of debate, albeit unacknowledged, was the contradiction between the conventionalist, an interdisciplinary analysis of avant-garde (the cinema is a site for the flourishing of creative attitude and the question of its safety in the wider postmodern world of cinema).

The Festival is a fair part of cultural trade from all continents, and this year, under the auspices of a post-war, neo-fascist political assembly, the common reference given upon the majority of films screened was the

question of history. With so many film documentaries, historical positions in a variety of situations to the present (especially films re-addressing Nazism and Fascism), the Festival is again turned into a hot bed of moral dilemmas, clashing on the first day with Pasquale Sciarra's *Charlie*, which caused some trouble to the film world.

So what happens in the center thereof? For directors such as Jacques Rivette, whose film was largely ignored, and Sergio Leone, whose film was re-released, this discussion was never entered into, there is no political place in Venice, and their positions as artists clearly separate them from inclusion in such social orientated trends. Established directors are only so good as their last film and for a director such as Marco Ferreri, whose film received relatively little favour, Venice more or less turns them from figures history. Even video clips were given the same treatment, shown in brief programming as a cinema evaluation in order to give some credence to their visual credibility and filmic roots. However, the audience mostly consisted of Venetian teenagers hungry for Michael Jackson, who dominated the screen, making of the cinema by using along with the more popular films. The cinematic re-evaluation film at the Festival was a newly compiled version of *Monty Python*, complete with color tinting, visual effects by George Baker, and a sequence of satirical music of caricatures, which while being related aesthetically did not receive enthusiastic reaction from the press.

Amidst a great deal of confusion and superficial criticism, one finally is left with the film themselves, which stand up well, making Venice like a natural which creates can play.

Films in Competition

The opening night film was the only American entry in *Chaplin*, Martin Scorsese, directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and Michael Kohlhauser. While making strong efforts to do some sort of a study of the postmodernist problems, which faced mourning scholars from World War II, the film began with excerpts from one of John Ford's war-making documentaries. The film is also a vehicle for Massimo Lupo. As Maria, the woman whose overbearing sexuality cannot be respected by her husband

John (John Savage), because he lost control of his mind while during the war, Maria's strong will is caused. Supposed to be a direct exploration of her physical desire. Like *Tab*, Maria's physical desire (which is realized by her sexually which is broken by the sexual kind of rape — in this case a wedding night). When she tells parents to him, she cracks down her husband who has lost, unable to cope with his experience, but she is not well diagnosed — she is now the scared adolescent. After many agonies and a visit from his father (played by Robert Mammola, who is not used to the film except as a war film), Maria finally returns to Maria, in last, she is convinced that her marriage, thus satisfying the subconscious notion the film is desperately tries to release.

Maria's love is called into a different form from many of the *Compassion* films, which represented a defense body of style, although diverse while still, that was distant from and perhaps appeared to be. However, Venice will probably replace the concept of the European Art film (the event is a movie, an exhibition rather than (video) and the real competition is between the French and Italian cinema). This year the French entry was absolutely made: *Tab* by Alain Kermes, Jacques Rivette, Eric Rohmer, and John Kowalski, who are, of course, all Frenchmen from the French New Wave. *Tab* is the apocalyptic standard of a French film — heroically orchestrated series interrupted by flashes of black or as an up of salt water falling across the frame and counterpointed with symbolic music — *Tab* is a movie. *Tab* (also *Tab*) is quite simply a low story with the same intensity as *Herodias* was more but without the profound dramatic or sensory and time. With no credits (except of actors — Robert Assens, Fanny Ardant, Pierre Arditi and André Dussolier) — it is a film characterized by generous moments of emotional exchange. As with *Tab* on its cinema, *Tab* is a movie is a direct influence of *Robert* in the 1960s, concentrating on the theme of love and how which transcends over all, even as the face of death.

The film began with the death of Saint-Ardant, who is the love of Elisabeth (Ardant), but after several scenes, which suggestively refers to his, acknowledging his love for her color and supplying it by the knowledge that Saint will soon be again

and separate from forever. These scenes (French, Italian) (Ardant) and Jeanne (Dussolier), are married, but both are Frenchmen, making with different concepts of their love. *Tab* is love, God, and death is somewhat dissonant between the couples, and Saint's concept, final death is more or less explained by his devotion with it. For *Tab*, the division between the living and the dead is transcended by a spiritual notion of eternal love. After *Tab* ends, Elisabeth seems to join this lot is portrayed by Judds and Judds that the most keep living for Saint's sake.

Contrary to popular consensus, *Robert's* last film is to show him (Nights of the Full Moon) *Tab* in Paris did not win the Golden Lion, but was definitely one of the best films at the Festival. Contrasting *Robert's* (and of "Moral Tab" and "Proven by"), which was begun with a French movie — "He who has two wives lives in hell. He who has two hearts lives in hell." Both comedy and tragedy, it is a complex dramatic study of a young woman who cannot decide for herself the type of life she wants to lead.

Laura (Pascale Ogier) loves seduction, but does not like the traditions of her relationship with her lover, with whom she shares a house in the suburbs. She likes to party all night while he likes to stay at home. So she decides to rent an apartment in Paris, which she justifies in her heart as a place where she can take (in a long distance), and party on the weekend without disturbing his life. In reality, she wants to be a free to achieve his approximation with prospective lovers and male friends. After a few months of living still double life and a constant effort in Paris, she decides to return to her house in the suburbs, but is horrified when her lover confesses that he has been up to similar games and wants to sever their relationship altogether. Disillusioned, she returns to Paris where the film ends.

In the role of Laura, Ogier has been allocated the task of being not only an actress, but also a kind of creative director. *Robert's* majestic use of sets and his employment of surreal and odd makes this a film of portraits of people in domestic situations and their assumption of love. Much of the film consists of Laura's journeying and returning, herself in her experience and allowing moments with friends over the telephone. It is in many ways, like



Levina (Pierella Gagliardi). "A young woman who cannot decide for herself the case of her life she wants to sing." *Elle* (Roberto's Les Amis de la jeune fille).

actor de la plaine l'aura remanié et de Godard's Vite au vie, both in its source style and the way in which Gagliardi plays a woman similar to Nina, trapped by her self-created fiction, the camera releases herself from it because she believes she is in full control of said, hence, she is freed from it. Gagliardi won the award for Best Actress at the Festival.¹

Although already discussed as Geoff Godard's report on Cannes, Roberto's *L'Amour par terre* took an interesting and therefore important place in Venice and deserved special mention. Roberto's cinematic still saw bravely with the representation of his characters with respect to a self-referential medium, and to this respect *L'Amour par terre* is his most accomplished film. Two actresses, Charlotte and Emily (Dorothea Chaplin and Jane Bitjak), stage themselves to a playwright who produces a strange type of theatre called "supermarket theatre". The action takes place in the front of a house and the audience watches from the doorway. When in *Colère et Julie* (see below) on Jeanne (Katherine and Julie) (see below) where two girls watch the fiction which evolves in the house, in this film Roberto has removed the situation, and Charlotte and Emily are in a position in which they might be the ones to turn away and then down the cover in the box.

L'Amour par terre, with its clever dialogue and internal problems in the house where the theatre is played (the Surrealist's own objects possess movements and the girls represent a number of voices which manage to be as objective as possible in the game the playwright has set up), is a supreme statement on the function of fiction in

film, and for this reason provides a sublime mirror with which to reflect the myth of numerous films whose narrative capability is in an obvious state of poverty.

Jean Roberto's *Dissonance* — a very different French film — also places in perspective the idea of recording the unconscious. In *Dissonance*, the mind of Isaac and more is displaced from its indigenous environment (Isaac has brought together a variety of performers of diverse race, age and sex) to a machine shop, where an American professor is demonstrating his three quarters. "The Need for the Nerve" (a French film) is a very interesting and quite bizarre film, a biography of a person who has made them to their own dream, these people construct a life and then collapse in complete with a loss of collective values. In the extraordinary and quite bizarre film, a biography and the shaping of reality and myth are merged to produce a spectacle which reveals itself as an act of resistance.

Placed against the French context, the Italian situation appeared as a block of carefully chosen films aimed at producing the industry at a distance and proposing a new one, in which artistic cultural discourse could be played out. For the Italians, the filmmakers of a definite identity with regard to film is still a major priority, and a problem finally surfaced in economic and distribution. The local industry is only now feeling the pinch of the introduction of video and the popularity of television over cinema — even directors such as Michelangelo Antonioni and Federico Fellini are finding it hard to raise money for new projects — and many films are being produced without English subtitles in order to avoid local competition. A great deal of work is placed in internationally aware directors, and this year the future of Marco Ferreri to deliver the goods caused much heated debate.

Il futuro è donna (The Future is Woman) is Ferreri's enthusiasm and should attempt at portraying feminism and modernism in a concept rather than a biological one. Despite the relationship between it and *Thelma*, it is a simple play with human undertones which Ferreri sees as analogous to some kind of sexual and communication problem in the future.

Anna (Gianna Schiraldi) and Gordon (Niki Amoretti) have as children, a decision they have consciously made because they fear they could see after a child a secret future, with the child of making education drawing closer to maturity. However, they meet Malvina (Graziella Masi) a woman who is not only present but beautiful, and from here on she is accorded the same attention as a character in *Il futuro è donna*. When Gordon is killed by nothing less than a rock concert, the two women reject their life with the prospect of Malvina's "come to the future" child. When the baby arrives, Malvina sets off to resume her wonderful life-style, leaving the child with Anna so she must independently realize the film with a female conclusion which not only reinforces Ferreri's message, but also explores itself with a major link in the past of feminism.

Needless to say, as Ferreri's press conference he was verbally dominated by the Italian press, but despite the credibility of almost every Italian film was questioned.

With so many films devoted to gender relations, gender and other issues is a key point and source of confusion. *Il Futuro è Donna* (The Future is Woman), a well-acted, fairly simple statement of Malvina's subordination in a ritualistic dialogue, Luigi Comenari's *Così* (How) the first part of a series intended for television which documents the life of a young man from the turn of the century until World War I, and Francesco Rosi's *La vita è un lavoro* (A Life is a Work of Art), a Tarento Brothers' recent life story, all testified to the importance of recognizing a lost social history. With the exception of the new Tarento Brothers film, *Il Futuro è Donna*, these films are characterized by an obsession with recording the past through the narrative of a personal



Ann Amoretti's "Introductory and some scenes" (discovery) for her film *Il Futuro è Donna* at industrial society.

history or memory? But, as Rosi tellingly depicts war, history is complicated with personal myth and identity. Divided into five acts (leading to read the film is also scheduled for its introduction) and on in Italy, these vignettes of superstition, passion, violence and the reflection of man are more like visions than representations of an real or recent history.

3. These films also reflect the needs of production which have now become standardized in the ability of history, an abstract system remains, divided light and a minimum of editing with time preserved as an abstract — a complete history.



Representing a lost social history: Francesco Rosi's *La vita è un lavoro*.

1. *Feminist Festival* as *Quarter of a day* (1981).
2. *Cinema Europe*, No. 47, p. 121.

In *Kam*, there is also the sense of something like history riding the surface of it, and there is a wonderful sense of the splendor in which the water of these tales meets his third mother who says to him:

Learn to look at things also through the eyes of those who don't see any danger. You will certainly find pain, but that pain will make things more sacred and beautiful.

The last film in *Compagnons* was Pasquale Squitieri's *Cherita*, starring the glamorous Claudia Cardinale as Cherita Pioneri, Minicucci's last mistress who there to die in his bed when dramatic captured him while he was fleeing to Switzerland. Documenting Cherita's faith in and devotion to the cause, the film says very little about her life with the frequent representation of Hitler, Minicucci's ready comrade. If you don't know behind and the great manifestations of the past of Fascism, it is a brilliant glimpse of Cherita's shimmering and her family's struggle to save their own skin when the empire crumbled.

The morning after the morning, the party announced that it felt it necessary to make a statement about the film. Defiant, all official codes of political correctness, some members of the party (including Guster Guster, then Roberto Albero and Gregory Yevichuk) denounced *Cherita* as a heavily disguised, pro-Fascist film which they refused to consider as a legitimate entry in *Compagnons*. With the press room overflowing a sea, Squitieri had little choice but to defend himself but managed to personally insult Guster publicly — the ground some of Fascism is that it was an unfortunate observation, an error attributable to the Germans. For a moment, members of a liberal democracy which are afraid the attack of someone backwards were about to end, and *Cherita* was used as a scapegoat for exaggerated prejudices which obviously have yet to be raised.

The amazing career appeared more realistic and more in *Albero*, Edgar Rosta's *Blumatt* (Hollander) son, from what I saw of it — the film is 15 hours and 24 minutes long — visually running with a kind of accumulative narrative which enables it to roughly cover the years from the beginning of the century until the present in a small German town, almost happily located in a "homeland." A kind of different film about the world and white and color, the film has an incredible feel of genuine love, with every shot miraculously framed, revealing a series of old photographs. As this film and other German production (outside the *Compagnons*) showed, the problem the Germans experience with history is their inability to remove the social dimension of society which distorts the experience of the past. *Blumatt* remains aware with a sense of pain — the difference between those who leave their homeland and those who stay forever — how as history is created to forget it can be forgot.

An unusual and impishly styled German-Polish production provided a masterful counterpart to *Blumatt*. Jürges Silver's *Naigoren* (best from *One New Times*) with stark images, discordant music and rough silence provides to take it into a new or visible, that film surface with considerable worth. As in *Wim Wenders*: *Der stand der Dinge* (the

State of Things), the city of Lisbon became a place where only memory and duplication of people can be found, a kind of surreal island where making business is a fixed occupation.

A German artist returns to Lisbon 10 years after the revolution of 1974 to show his paintings in a just exhibition with his girlfriend, whom he thinks has not arrived but who has been in the city the whole time, covering her tracks. As much as it is about the frustration of communication, these people are without a story, a focus, and are still listening to each other for the sake while they believed they held power in the Revolution. Their only course is obtaining a word, a kind of sense of silence. Putting it into the product of their circumstances, so which there is a wealth of possibilities which each person is pressed in violent, beautiful strands of color. In *No One Twice*, the absence of things — dialogue, action, motivation, all happens as it has a story — landscape which is its history, a sense of its nature, in which things are reduced to gestures.

Reynald Zucchi's *Black Bookings* (also in *The Year of the Pomegranate*) was the Golden Lion, but as it did not see it is still recent, issued on the runner-up. Screened by French-Croatian Michelle Lenoir. With a Robert Bresson-like air of futility and cynicism about it, this stark, dispiriting story of two young girls whose only visible source of happiness is their Williams machine which have been the saddest film in Venice. Both girls, in the beginning of the film,

are seen establishing friendship — respectively with a boy driver and a filmmaker — but there are some moments when the two girls are scared and the filmmaker realizes his cause is too strong to continue relation. The girls decide to commit suicide publicly, but with the assurance that someone will surely save them. They board the subway and as

with a man proceed behind them which reduces their sadness — "If you don't do something we will die!" — and then proceed to realize benefits of pity. They die, in the great steps when a strike is called and they go unattended, ending the film with a feeling of his childhood for a spectacular moment of death that never even-tered.



Top: Paul Schrader's *Schindler* and Edgar Rosta's *Blumatt*. At hour and 24 minutes (bottom) Edgar Rosta's *Blumatt*. Two young girls in a path to suicide.

Films Outside Competition

Films screened outside the Competition were not necessarily deemed "avant garde" or even independent, indeed far less so, as each film is placed in a section, which, in theory, defines its conditions of production and viewing. More or less, there are recommended guides for viewers: "Venice by night" (films for the masses), "Venice TV" (self-explanatory, "People") (usually ethnographic shorts), "De Sica" (up and coming Italian directors), "Work of the Century" and "Special Programs" (political and social themes).

The only Australian entry in the festival was Richard Lowenstein's *Indochina*, as Paul Carr's *My First Wife* was rejected for "lacking sufficient quality". *Indochina* was screened in the Cinema's West program and was more than a success, no doubt due to its exciting visuals, as much of the intensity of language was lost in the translation. A film documenting such a sensitive event would of course be severely questioned at Venice, but the only major criticism came from *Indochina*, the newspaper of the extreme Left, which complained that the editors did not appear to suffer enough to justify the importance of such a strike. At the press conference, Lowenstein was encouraged to pursue his career on a grander scale ("You'll better come to Sydney"), the chief male supermodel and the festival exposed (although in including his video clips in the "Video and Cinema" section, KAT (Radio and Television of Italy, a national network), however, had already stopped them up, and Lowenstein was threatened that night on live television from the festival).

Also well received was Richard Firth's *Laughinghouse*. As with *The Phoenician's Lament*, Firth's comic wit and sharp tongue criticism of his country has been developed to his individual trademark. This film is more of a comedy in heavy appeal story of a Norfolk farmer, who works his acres in London for the Christmas market after his plowing team go on strike, represent English countryside as a confusion of misconceptions, superstition and complacency. As in *The Phoenician's Lament*, the work is especially viewed at present and should be remembered, is this film they follow the farmer and his children, reporting on their every step and updating on the epidemic of the great victims of humanity or political protest?

Clearly, the most politically problematic films were two films sharing the same subject and ideology: German Oliver North (Under Pressure) Robert Kruse and Woodhull by Thomas Harlow, one of the famous propagandist, Viet Harlow. Both are quasi-interpretive documentaries about as in North's mind. Both are more and dramatically potent scenes with this issue, anonymous film from the Third Reich, both films severely question latter attitudes toward propaganda and the body. For Kruse, this was a case of dealing with German history from an American perspective, of employing a judgemental style of interpretation whereby the Nazi and the superior for the film and the film's theme of political action. For Harlow, the film became more of a direct historical question. With the advent of



Film director Thomas Harlow on the set of *Woodhull* following the post. Above: Richard Lowenstein at "Venice" (standing last in Sergio Leone's *Cine* one video in America)

the popularity of the Wenders aesthetic of the past is unimpaired, the film becomes a question of pelting the past and thinking, dramatically, the connection between generations.

Festival director and contemporary critic and essayist, Carly

Lizant, presented a last moving metaphor thriller, *Nuclear Zero*, which is a study of a group of terrorists at Rome during the late 1970s. Neither concerning the radiating the phenomenon of terrorism, the film deals specifically with its operations and strategies rather than its motivation.

The festival, headed by an advocate of the 1960s, decided to characterize, restoring memory and avoid conflict and adopting mutually loyal and credible views which enable them to translate completely normal lives, while they consider sophisticated and highly detailed characters. They are absolutely sure their meaning and rationality allows each of them to be part of a precise organization which always runs smoothly and the father of the youngest member steps in and through that experience, and their place in history in serious terms.

Confirmed for being out of date this sensitive model of the player appears within society has indeed been overused in countless television events, it is considered an overplaying with the question of identity and the contradictions in progress in a society which finds it extremely difficult to relate and respond to its own.

Finally, I am leaving the best until last. Overseeing me, not a reasonable person at the Festival (initially received in China and screened here on the eve of its Italian release) chosen as a obligatory language to both the director and his national roots, Sergio Leone's *Cine* was video in America (Just Knew a Time in America) it is, in many ways, the individual blackboard that my self-proclaimed perfection of "Cinema as Art" would find. Not only is it designed for musical consumption on an international scale, but it is a masterpiece in theory for persons and leaving every sacrifice that of the trade. With *Flashback* written *Flashback*, a plot which commonly explores into a chosen direction, and with members and details outlining in the musical of choice and decision, the documentary of this film is breathtaking. (Score out of 10)

Time is a great character in the film. Above all it is about memory and nostalgia, and a grand story of the friendship between two men. It is not the subject's part of the Godfather. It is not the end of the world with events as with *Indochina*.

Beginning and ending is an open den, the film is composed as a dream and, for Leone, America will represent a false, a mythical place where things exist as the result of a kind of unreality, but definitely beautiful, almost child-like desire. And, like his speeches: *Westerns* the violence is a great, often with those in place which can only be overcome on the condition that death is pre-empted and managed by control, and, in the case, pre-empt, but always in a moment, inevitably unbalanced games of friendship and betrayal. As "Woodhull", (one who runs the film is projected, Robert De Niro) is never it is merely placed in a situation in which he is no longer "the man who would take me home", but rather the man whose personal control of his has been extended and replaced by a severe replica of himself, who must contend with an infection of traps continuously designed for his entertainment. There are the delicate Leone trademarks: slow-up of eyes, attention to minute detail and focus with visual cues of identity. Referring here on a feature designed to make the identity visible by contrasting it with the present and the "past", the artifice of *Cine* is *Indochina* in America (one in last once red and more laughable).



Angela Punch McGregor

*Jim Schembri interviews the award-winning actress about her role in **Annie's Coming Out**, a film based on Rosemary Crossley and Anne McDonald's account of their fight for Anne's freedom.*

Many of the women you have played have to insert themselves in other people's lives or transcend the social circumstances in which they are trapped. For in *"Narcissus"* is trapped in her home and has to restore her Roman Catholic values to Les (Didi Fierstein) to get him to spend more time with her. Jeanette in *"We of the Never Never"* stands up for herself against the men who didn't think she belonged in the outback. And Jeanette, in *"Annie's Coming Out"*, fights the prejudiced attitudes of a Victorian mental hospital system. Is that where something you have deliberately tried to follow through?

No, it is not at all intentional. You try to get roles in films you think will be the most successful artistically, films that have something to say and are entertaining. And those films need, very often, to be the ones with social issues involved.

Another reason is that I am not a commercial actress in the 32-grade sense. I don't get a lot of 32-grade offers, so I really don't have a choice. The ones that I am in, which it knows as socially aware or art house or whatever, is why those characters have probably developed.

When you say you are "not a commercial actress", do you mean you go for roles you are happy with rather than roles in films you think will be successful?

No. To be very exact, I am basically not too sure I had an identity crisis about that a few years ago, but you have to live with what you are. You can't be what you are not.

Annie's Coming Out

Most of your work has been in period or genre films. *"Annie's Coming Out"* is your first contemporary film, both in its setting and in the issues with which it deals. Did that influence your accepting the role?

No. I took the role of Jeanette because it was a very good one — and challenging. The reason we are drawn a lot of historical films is because we have a lot of history to go through. Contemporary films are in the minority.

So you don't think it significant that the heroine in *"Annie's"* is contemporary?

I have never looked at it that way. The feminist cause is some thing that belongs to the 1970s and is dying down in maturity, and, hopefully, ending into a healthy female as the 1980s. But the Australian woman is a strong species and her history is an interesting one. We came out as convicts and were broken, from the start, not only authority but also the convict men who probably took advantage of us in many respects and made us pretty tough. Honestly, Rosemary Crossley is English!

I am thankful that there are good Australian roles for women. We are still a strong bunch in 1984.

When were you offered the part of Jeanette?

I screen-tested for the film nearly two years ago but it was 12 months before we actually shot it. They offered me the role and, as happens now, you have to put a deposit on. Australian stars to keep

them in the film. They didn't have the money to do that, so I said there was no one offering me the part. I had my doubts as to whether it would go.

Your preparation for the film involved working with autistic children and consulting with Anne McDonald. Who did you go into that high level of involvement?

Looking after handicapped people was something foreign to me. I basically did a crash course in physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy with autistic kids in Sydney so that I would have confidence in myself.

and be relaxed when communicating with them. But I also had to know how to feed them, lift them and carry them, because there are very particular ways of doing that.

One imagines many actors would shirk from that, preferring to imagine what it is like...

I don't work like that. I like to go involved, to do my job well.

How much time was allocated to rehearsal on *"Annie's"*?

Gil Bresley [director] demanded a week's rehearsal, something other directors are now also doing.



Angela (Angela Punch McGregor) and Annie (Tina Aronoff) in Gil Bresley's *Annie's Coming Out*.



Quinn (Angie Pouch) and husband Quinn (Anthony Quinn) at home in Fred Schepers' *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*.

think heaven. Appearing as a mad scientist, a lot of film directors don't know what securing an actor is. And it is not only in this country. So you are left to your own device.

Really the whole point of being a director is knowing how to correct what is wrong in an actor's performance, as an actor's last delivery. And I know some directors, such as D. Don, who have that talent. I don't know if it is a talent you can learn, but I am sure it is one you can improve.

I was an assistant in the film industry in 1975 when I did the role of Golda in *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*. Thank God, Fred Schepers was the director. I was taught by him and he brought a performance out in me for which I am grateful.

So most Australian directors have left you as your own?

Yes, in this country, if you rely on the ability of the director, you've had it.

At the same time, it is impossible to rely on yourself—every actor needs help, and very few actors get it.

Film acting is a strange craft. I am entirely a character actor. I am not a personality actor. It is essential for me, Humphrey Bogart, you would describe as a person actor, Meryl Streep is a character actor.

Character acting on film causes a lot of problems for the person involved. I have to learn, and I am still learning, how to project my personality better on the screen because screen acting demands a lot of the person. That means exposing up yourself as a person. With certain parts of my personality I find that hard to do. But I am getting better in some areas.

"Annie's Coming Out" is a commercially conceived film; the characters and the situations are clearly defined so that the audience can identify with them. In some instances, the characters are stereotypes. Annie, for example, is rather two-dimensional and not well-rounded . . .

That is my fault. But it is of no value putting my qualities about the performance into a publication because the public would not know what I was talking about.

If the characters are cardboard cut-out in Annie's, it is probably because it was shot so quickly. All the actors were asked to do a lot of work in a very short time. I was sometimes shooting an scene a day, which is a lot of work. I think more money should have been allowed to the film, it is a good enough story to have had more time and money spent on it.

Some of the showbusiness may also be due to marketing. That happens because cutting is a director's prerogative.

We of the Never Never

Annie's character seems restricted by the narrative of the film. How does she survive her disapproval of the men without actually doing anything. Did that restrict the latitude you had in performing the role?

What the public is probably unaware of is that only half of the script of *We of the Never Never* was shot. A lot of good scenes were cut because of the restrictions on time and budget, such to my disappointment and anger then. We ended up with a very slow-moving narrative and a more intellectual film than I had anticipated.



Angie Pouch (center), with her husband Len (Fred Schepers), left, and Anthony Quinn (right) in *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*.

Still, it was kind of lucky we had a film at all.

Annie's character doesn't develop and is a bit passive . . .

Yes, but it was that way. We went home without finishing the film, so I knew it would be passive and that a lot of it would get cut out.

What we have still to learn in this country is that you cannot fix up a film in the editing room. It has to be done beforehand, before it is shot, even before the storyboarding. Some of us are starting to learn this preparation is everything.

Are scriptwriters part of the problem?

I think more latitude on the part of the screenwriters about what their characters are in the script is required. A lot of screenwriters don't understand there are basic rules for writing a piece of entertainment. I don't think they consider enough to what an audience will and will not sit through. We fight the Los Angeles formula for making films, which admittedly goes to the end extreme with action and sex, but I think we could adopt a kind of the Hollywood system.

Do you think Australian films are too ethnic?

I don't know about ethnic. I would say the French were about they come out towards the other



Annie (Angie Pouch McGregor) and husband Annie (Anthony Quinn) in a scene from *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*.

end of the spectrum. But we are still very provincial. We have a lot to learn.

So how did you feel when you saw the finished film?

I am very proud of the quality of the film. It is an Aussie picture because of the people involved. Gary Hinman, who died tragically last year, was almost a genius with lighting. You couldn't go wrong with him. Jo Ford, the Melbourne girl, the art designer, was extraordinary. And a lot of the others were, I think, very good.

For [Hinman], who is a very talented director, achieved the crime around him as we had to end up with a quality picture of some sort. But, as I said earlier, I knew what was happening while we were shooting, and I got very worried. I fought very hard to do more dramatic scenes because we were shooting panoramas of horses avoiding across the desert. There was no conflict and all I could do for myself was to play a love story.

But, even on that level, the relationship between Antas and Asante is very slight . . .

That was because of the purely riding and the commodity problems.

Many critics panned the film and attacked your performance. Do you take any notice of reviews?

Yes. You get hurt when someone doesn't like you, especially if it is on the printed page. It is more permanent and you think, "My God, the world is going to read this!"

I find that the critics are not particularly good at analyzing why something is wrong. I try to deduce from what they have written what

they really didn't like, and how I can fix it. Of course, if I don't agree, then I ignore it.

I don't like actors who get up in arms because a critic has said something against them or their play. Australian critics may not be good at analyzing what is wrong with a film or a play, but the fact that they don't like it leads me to suspect that something is wrong.

What about film awards? Are they important?

A lot of people don't like the awards competition in film or theatre and I see that point of view clearly. What I do like about awards is the publicity for the films and for the individual performers. If we don't keep ourselves in the forefront of the minds of producers and distributors we will not continue to work.

It is a hard job doing publicity, but I regard it as a job that has to be taken very seriously. I have loyalty to the films I make to help them get on.

Award nights are primarily publicity events. Getting an award is a great moment, a great thrill and compliment. Everybody loves you for a night, the next morning it is usually over.

Other Roles

You have appeared on three folkies: "Best of Friends," "The Island" and "Double Day", which were in the comedy, adventure and thriller genres respectively. Was the opportunity to work in different genres part of the attraction?

I took those roles for various reasons. With *The Island*, people ask me if I was disappointed it was



Tom (Graham Blundell) and Wilma (Angie Fench McGregor) are not the diamonds of whaler good friends one became leaver. Michael Robertson's film of Friends

a B-grade movie. I knew it was a B-grade movie when I read the script. But the chance of working with Michael Cairns, of being in a film produced by Zaneck and Brown, the producers of *Bliss*, and doing an overseas movie was irresistible to me. Whether it was a mistake, I still don't know. Any performance that doesn't take you anywhere is regrettable, but the experience was invaluable to me.

What did you get out of working on "The Island", an aesthetic and commercial disaster?

I don't know, but I remember that at the time my eyes were wide open every day at the Hollywood buzz. I was 25 and had done only two films. It was a great event that I was getting that challenge. What I was learning, it was like travelling to Mars.

Was it your big shot at international stardom?

No, that came to me later with *We of the Never Nerve*. I wasn't even a star in Australia then, so that idea hadn't entered my head. The fact that I covered myself in mud means I couldn't have been too desperate.

How did you get the role?

Michael Rafter, the director, wanted to use an actress who wasn't American, so he had to be either a Briton or an Australian. I think he started in Australia helped him decide. By coincidence, Newman was airborne on the plane on his way over here, and the role of Fay interested him. He called Fred Schepers and asked if he should use me. Fred said sure, and I did a screen test.

What do you think of the film?

It is quite an interesting story. It was a disaster at the box-office because it was aimed at 13- to 16-year-old male teenagers, and they were the people who were not allowed into it [in Australia] because it received an "R" rating.

I hadn't studied censorship in any detail, but I thought that was ridiculous. I didn't think the violence was any grimmer than in other adolescent movies.

What about "Best of Friends"?

I did *Best of Friends* because it was an excellent script. It was then rewritten by all of us. Donald McDonald [the scriptwriter] was very open about it.

The film was badly handled and I was content, but I think it became a wasted the shilliness of doing comedy, which I hadn't done before. I thought any role was well written and wasn't storyboarded.

How was the script motivated?

The director wasn't up to it, the film was amateur, the budget wasn't good . . . there were several reasons. I don't think Australians are very good at doing comedy, yet.

Do you plan on trying comedy again?

I think at all I probably would if I were asked, but I probably won't be asked.

How did you get involved in "Double Day"?

I was offered the role of a model, which amazed me. It was a long time since I had made a film and I found that if I didn't do it I would no longer be the plug hole. The role was a mistake, the film was a mistake. But I didn't know that at the time.

Brian Kavanagh turned out to be one of the most sensitive directors to actors that I have ever come across, but I don't think he should write his own scripts.

Leslie Jordan's performance on *Love* was terrible. What was he like to work with?

Interesting. He is very much the romantic actor's idol and was professional to the bone. It was hard.

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Bliss (Michael Cairns) and Zilla (Angie Fench McGregor) in Michael Rafter's *The Island*, Fench McGregor's first "foreign" film.

We of the NEVER NEVER

Almos Maixay

*At the outset of this article, I want to acknowledge the stimulus provided by two sources: first, Tom Ryan's article in Film Year Book 1984 in which he names *We of the Never Never* as one of the "Australian Films of the Year"; and, second, a seminar discussion recently held at the Ballarat C.A.E. I think I am correct in characterizing the general response at the seminar to the film as favorable. The feeling was that it approached important themes which must be seen as central to Australian filmmaking; yet, ultimately, the film loses its way and wanders aimlessly, without suggesting a clear resolution to the complex issues it touches on within the narrative context. The following article attempts to explore the reasons behind this judgment.*

The dominant surface quality of the film is one of stark self-indulgence. The visual sound in *Acropolis*, an impression also emphasized on the soundtrack. Yet there is a point in the film when one encounters an eruption of violence of such absolute proportions, in physical quality and symbolic value, that the sensibility of the film is profoundly and irrevocably disturbed. This point coincides with the arrival of Jeanne Cane (Angela Punch McGarvey) on the Elsey Cattle Station. The specific shot records the assassination of a young bull.

This shot is remarkable for its explicitness. On the screen, there is the underbelly of a male animal, stretched out and opened for the camera. A hand, the left hand of a man, reaches in to grasp the scrotum. Then the right hand intrudes into the frame, holding a steel pocketknife that is barely visible. In a swift movement, the knife opens up a gash in the skin. The cut is real. There is a spurt of blood and the wound reveals the white edge of fatty tissue under the skin.

From the narrative point of view, the act of castration is linked with the arrival of Jeanne, the white "Museum" and wife of the new Station Manager. These are, obviously, enormous political consequences which stem directly from this fact. Jeanne's understanding of this situation remains problematical throughout the film, and it is possible to make the criticism that both the character and the film remain far too enmeshed in the superficialization of dress and hairstyle. Yet, at the point of her arrival in the cattle camp, there is one of the most successful shots of Jeanne in the whole film. There is an air of confidence in the way she sits on the horse, and she gives the impression of having enjoyed the physical experience of the journey which has been shown in some detail. One might almost speak of an air of triumph in Jeanne's face as one watches her ride, the telephone shot helping to accentuate the stature of her presence mounted on horse. The shot is most appropriate because her arrival at the camp is literally a triumph over the opposition and resistance to her presence expressed by the men from the beginning of the film.

The reason for this opposition and resentment remains one of the central questions of the film and the audience approaches it only hesitantly, or if through Jeanne's consciousness, of her slowly growing realization of the peering she engages with the social microcosm at Elsey. The circumstances of

Jeanne's arrival extend the dimensions of this question because, ultimately, when one starts piecing together the various clues supplied by way of answer, one realizes that the problem of the resentment shown to Jeanne, and its explicitness, actually provides the key to the interaction of the two racial groups in the film: Aboriginal and white.

Jeanne disturbs the balance of power on the cattle station simply by her arrival. Her presence in itself is sufficient to produce this effect. She becomes the interloper who the white men feel, and her friendship with the Aboriginal women, and the patronizing manner with which she supports them against the Aboriginal men, serves to establish the significance of her influence as a truly political



Jeanne (Angela Punch McGarvey) and Max (Tommy Barry) pose at their way to Elsey Station. *After Images: We of the Never Never.*



Dennis and Aarnes, growing close in horseback. *We of the Never Never*

unfolding. It winds around the story of Jack's (Lewyn Pils-Gerold) romance toward Jeanne Carr.

Jack is singled out as the one who must avenge the presence of the White Misses from the business of the film, even while the wedding is still taking place and the news of the even rancher the remote cattle camp in the Never Never via the telegraph. Jack gambles about the film, the best, and the dust, and reveals that a woman has also been added to the sum total of his business. He is waiting at the Elbow Homestead to see the New Boys and his Misses when the party arrives. The camera undercuts Jack's uncertainty, early presence, standing apart from the other women with his arms tightly crossed around his chest. Later, after Aarnes (Arlene Dugdale) proves himself and wins the men's confidence by demonstrating his skill on horseback, Jack is seen at

the side of the group, tightly coiled a stock-whip. The camera singles him out once more in a forward movement, and he speaks his intention by quietly telling Aarnes that he will be leaving after the wedding.

The next link in this chain of incidents actually brings Jack and Jeanne together, although the confrontation is never direct. While Aarnes and the other stockmen are away from the homestead, Jeanne climbs up on to the rails of the homestead to watch Jack working a young horse. She begins to question him about what he is doing. His short, clipped, terse replies indicate his discomfort at her presence. He explains that he is "beating" the horse, flicking a piece of old sack to frighten it, but holding tight on a long rein as the horse now as trying to teach it to remain calm despite the disturbance. Jeanne's questions eventually give Jack the cue for the cutting remark that brings

the conversation to an abrupt end. She points out, rather surely, that the constant flicking of the cloth near its forelegs is only making the horse's nervousness more pronounced. Jack retorts sharply with a direct rebuff: "Beginn' your pardon Missus. It's you that's makin' him nervous. He never was't seen a white woman before."

At this point, it is necessary to note the complaints on "hairs", not just on "women". This provides a clue for solving the riddles that have been proposed. Later in the film, two more clues are given. One is dropped in as an unexpected conversational exchange between Jack and Dennis, just after the discovery of a previously unknown and unwanted woman. The other major clue is given in a subsequent conversation between Aarnes and Jeanne concerning him (Robert Wiley) pretense inside the house. One need not pick up these clues now and work them into an interpretation. For the moment, let's move to the point in the film where a break occurs in the strained relations between Jack and Jeanne. This comes during the big cattle muster which involves the whole of the entire community. Jeanne is taken alone, as a spectator rather than as a participant. The counterpoint at this point is widely appropriate. The audience watches the woman's gurgling and whistling from behind a screen of green foliage. Shots of animals on the moving slowly in the dusty heat are interposed in the sequence. Finally, as a visual showpiece, two horsemen are seen chasing a breakaway beast across an open spread of brown earth and grass. The camera swings across the flat space following the riders. They are, in fact, Jack and Aarnes; the latter reaches down in a full gallop to catch the beast by the tail and, with a burst of speed, he wheels around in front of the animal, dragging it off its feet from behind.

Just as this movement begins, the camera cuts to one of those high, overcast crane shots which stand out so distinctively in the film. These shots often occur at moments of fast-paced action; they create an arena effect, enclosing the action within a dramatically delineated space. Now, as the two riders quickly descend to immobilize the fallen animal, the camera cranes down smoothly, the perspective flattens out to give a view of the two men against a distant horizon. The camera movement downwards, coming to rest just the ground, is very effective because it functions like a formal antebellum at the closing of a visual phrase.

Contrary to the next shot is carried subtly through the conversations between the two riders. Jack speaks first and makes out of these typically off-hand comments that are so true in detail to the Australian outback: "Did you hear that one in the library?" he asks of Aarnes, alluding to the fact that the New Boys had once previously worked in a library. Jack is obviously poking fun, but the comment also effectively indicates his approval for the way in which Aarnes has been able to work in a re-organized men to perform a stockbook demonstration. Aarnes answers Jack's sardonic joke in a serious manner: "I do wish you'd talk about singing on," he says. "I reckon I might," Jack replies.

The most curious and most obvious thing about the triangle of characters, Jeanne, Aarnes and Jack, is that it is defined. It is also possible to make the claim that, despite a very strong element of class, the shots that complete the sequence have mythic dimensions, whether one wants to define this in terms of the classic Western or the classic fairy-tale. After the excitement of the chase, the film returns to

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The Outback triangle: Aarnes, Jack (Lewyn Pils-Gerold), in the background and Jeanne. *We of the Never Never*

Ennio Morricone

*Ennio Morricone has written some of the cinema's most recognizable and best-loved film scores, from those for Sergio Leone's *Per un pugno di dollari* (A Fist Full of Dollars) and Bernardo Bertolucci's *Novocento* (1980) to Leone's *Once Upon a Time in America*. Here he is interviewed by Sue Adler.*

Did you have a formal musical education?

Yes. My father was a musician and he wanted me to be one, so he sent me to the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia in Rome. I wanted to follow the profession of a musician and composer of serious music, so everything I did was to realize that aim.

You were also, at one point, the leader of a light music orchestra...

Before writing film music, I did many different things. I studied by doing arrangements and orchestrations for the RAI, for television, for records, for the theatre and for composers who didn't want to write because they were lazy. Gradually, I was taught what in my own right, and I was able to reject my desire of making music under my own name.

You wrote under the name of Dino Savio for *"A Fist Full of Dollars"*. Was this because you were writing serious music and didn't want to compromise yourself?

No. I took a pseudonym, chosen at random, because the producers wanted the film to appear to be an American production. Obviously I couldn't use my name.

When was your debut in the cinema?

In 1951, with Luciano Salce's *Il fedele* (The Faithful Man).

Was writing for the cinema a natural musical progression?

Actually, it was the problem of how to live when you are not independently wealthy. I earned a little from classical music that gradually I started to do arrangements and I left by little by little into the cinema. It wasn't something I had planned, I have never determined anything in my life. I always just keep going. This is how I ended up.

Are you a filmmaker?

I don't go to the cinema very often, but I do like films. I prefer the ones which are least commercial, those which are on the level of art.

In the 1960s, how strong was the American influence on the Italian cinema?

It was very strong from 1960 to 1970. It was important from the artistic point of view: that period threw up some very important directors, and, what was fundamental for me, the Italian *Western*. Some very beautiful Italian films were made during that time, too.

What about the general atmosphere in Italian cinema then?

I don't remember it that much. I was in a formative stage, worried about substance and the basic problems of day-to-day life. The financial problems seemed insuperable. I didn't even notice politics, the economy of the Italian nation and the "economic miracle". My biggest problem then, as it is now, was how to survive the cinema in order to earn money and yet do so

without renouncing the ideals of a serious composer of the sort of music I have wanted to write since I was young.

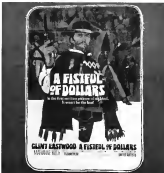
What were the influences in your musical formation?

Stravinsky is an extremely important composer, because of what he put into his music, because of the positive force with which he always infused his sounds, and because of his dynamic, turbulent overjoy and the way in which he acquired folkloric influences of Russia at that time and used them. He is one of the fundamental composers of contemporary music.

My maestro, Goffredo Petrassi, and several other composers — Stockhausen, Bartók, Messiaen, Poulenc and Mascagni, and Bach (another one I adore) — all have left very positive marks on

the course of my musical development. These composers are part of me, in that I have digested and filtered them. I can quite easily reproduce them, but in a manner completely opposed by my non-passivity towards them.

One's taste derives from the influences of these composers, the things one loves, everyday occurrences, contemporary music, and childhood memories. These form experience and experience forms technique, and from technique comes style, then comes music, and are therefore beyond our control. So I, and others, write in a certain way and only other people can define it. Maybe in years to come I will be able to hazard an appraisal of my production, artistically and technically. But I don't have the time to stop and reflect on things I have already done. I have to think of the future.



It seems as if you keep your distance socially from the cinema...

Yes, I am cut off from it. Usually I have become friends with certain directors and, as good friends, we go on to dinner. But in the early days I was at home, and that was it.

I don't go out looking for work, directors have to come to me. In the early days, after *The Federal Man*, the same director offered me another film and that the producer recommended me to another director and the circle started to enlarge. In my first five years I did about six films, most or less one a year.

You have worked with many Italians, but also a few Americans; for example, Don Siegel. Is the approach different?

Sometimes I have done American films without even meeting the director. This was very difficult because I am used to working with the director, knowing him, how he thinks and continues on them. In the absence of a director, there were times when I have felt rather lost. Fortunately, it hasn't happened too often.

With Don Siegel there was practically no collaboration. He came to the recording session but didn't know what I would record. It was strange and it happens — but not with Italians. There, the director chooses a particular composer because he knows his own work with him.

How do you go about scoring a film?

Once the composer accepts the task, discussion begins — either about the screenplay, during the shoot, or about a film which has already been shot. At this point a consensus is sought with the director, according to his ideas and the requirements of the composer. Once this common direction has been established, the composer starts working and translates the concept which has been agreed upon. The music is then born.

Do you work with an orchestra constantly?

Not since 1975. Once the music has been written, I go into the studio and conduct the orchestra, here to the recording, do the mix and then, if I have to edit the music, do so over the tape.

Does your approach differ when writing for a live audience and for the cinema?

Fundamentally, the two fields aren't that different; the exercise of writing music is always the same. There has to be a way to understand what the director is saying and then to translate it. It

differs with theatre is that there are fewer possibilities for music to be heard, sometimes it serves only to fill in between the action and sometimes it serves as background, but you really don't hear much because it can't drown out the actors. There isn't a definitive mix like in the cinema.

Also, in the theatre, there isn't the scope for long pieces of music. So it is difficult to express a musical idea. But there are all small problems. Basically, I don't find writing for the theatre very different from writing for the cinema, other than having to bear in mind the theatre where the music will be performed and the manner in which it will be reproduced — that is, the equipment.

Your first big film success was "*A Fist Full of Dollars*", whose score is very different from that of the Hollywood Writers. Your cultural perspective is obviously different. What were the stimuli?

The stimulus was the film itself. Leone had made an ironic and, in a certain sense, a satirical film in that it was funny, a caricature. It was necessary to express the clarity that I came wanted for his characters. Besides, I was not, and am not, a specialist in American folk music, as what was there in my knowing the characters like Americans? If that is required, let an American composer.

So, I tested Leone's characters by attempting to re-invent, in my way, American folk, bearing in mind certain musical and ideological data. And then the enlightened treatment of the characters encouraged me to introduce strange sounds into the score so that the character would have the character Leone wanted.

The music for "*Once Upon a Time in the West*" and "*A Fist Full of Dollars*" was, in its way, quite unrecognizable...

For a soundtrack it was strange, but in itself it wasn't strange or male.

In "*Once Upon a Time in the West*", the theme of the "*West*"...

The West existed and we had to know this in mind. So Sergio Leone and I focused first attention on the characters and, therefore, on the feelings I would say that an act, or a thought, of love is basically the story in *Lapland*, the U.S., Australia or Africa. Certainly there are cultural differences, but what commands in film is the way in which the audience comprehends the music: that is, what the music is saying, which isn't what the director is saying.

Music must be international if you always have to bear in mind what the public is capable of understanding. For this reason

Sergio and I concentrate more on the characters and their feelings: these reflect better to be interpreted manually so that the audience is able to understand them. For example, for a bad guy one uses music which is dissonant, gloomy and dark. The choice of instruments doesn't come into it: that (which I use) doesn't matter for a bad guy with the brightness of instruments.

Do you have an "alphabet" or code which you use to depict certain situations or ideas?

I don't have an "alphabet" but rather what I would call the composer's address (unity of style): that is to say, what I feel dramatically for that character. So independently of how the character is written, I insist on my style for interpreting a character.

How would you define your style, and how does it come about?

Well, that's a difficult question for me. The exact moment when the musical idea occurs is quite elusive. Sometimes I spend days pursuing that moment and I can't find it; then, just when I least expect it, it hits me.

So, it is very difficult for me to tell you how that "magic" moment comes about, what musical idea takes form and involves a situation of creative difficulty, or the usual crisis when writing any sort of music. It is the love between a man and a woman: the first moment is something unobtainable.

I would like to say that it is the unconscious work of all the things I love from the music: I love to people, things, experiences from childhood. The use of all this is combined with study and practice of my maestro and the condensed technique acquired from certain composers.

In the cinema, you have to create something and to do this you have to have recourse to various modes of communication, but not to the work of the various modes, rather the synthesis of them. For example, with *Once Upon a Time in the West*, I wrote a piece for Henry Fonda that employed the paradoxical use of percussion to create a certain sensation, instead of a sense of lullaby and growing danger. The use of the voice, when Fonda is trying to make love to Claudia Cardinale, was intended to create an atmosphere of tenderness.

I can tell about the results, but technique only expresses itself and evolves as I write. Times like "tenderness" are perfectly correct but it is not really necessary to use them.

How do you treat the music in films such as the "*Battle of Algiers*" and "*Marco Polo*" so that it remains faithful to the audience?



Claudia Cardinale in Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in the West*: the score focused on the characters rather than the theme of the West.



Max (Dino) Finkel, one of the richest crime figures in Brooklyn, is once upon a time in America



"Prohiber" Robert De Niro and Carol (Tandy) Wildy. Once Upon a Time in America.

There are two distinct divisions. One is the music of the characters, which suggests them quite apart from the experience in which they are situated. The other type is about the ambience of places, and is suggested by the circumstances and quality of where the action is situated. These are two completely different types of music. The first deals with the interior aspect of the character, and is done by the composer. The second is how the music of the composer. If I write music on Chinese folk song it is our music only by chance. Chinese folk music has been an influence a lot longer than I have and is part of a historic process. I can't use authentic instruments.

With the film you have recently worked on, "Once Upon a Time in America", the action commences in the 1920s and finishes in 1968. This must cover a wide variety of musical types, such as the 1920s jazz...

I can write jazz very well, it isn't a problem for me. But it doesn't involve much invention because jazz is something already historically acquired. It would be the same if I had to do a film about Mozart and write music like Mozart, that would be an exercise of pure craftsmanship. But it wouldn't be my music, it would be the music of Mozart.

If I were to complete the jazz music in Leone's film with my themes, music are far more important, they come into the film when the camera looks into the eyes of the character. The theme that suggests out what he is thinking at that moment, what is going on inside, what he is about to say. The past and my mode a character is what my music is about. The jazz doesn't do that. It's like that, they are atmospheric and casual music, incidental to the story and the places.

Not all films pose this problem. Of historical music and character music. For example, A Man and a Woman take place in a contemporary setting and the audience

enters with the mind and ears of today. The division between the historical music and the character's music doesn't occur, the music is very precisely one type music of today, for characters of today, for a film which takes place today.

Have there been instances where you have had comic music?

There have been instances when directors have said to me, "I don't know what to say to you, do as you think best." For example, with Roberto Rossini on his first film. This doesn't mean that the director doesn't want to discuss the matter, but that he wants the composer to go away and think about it, and then come back with suggestions. Then if the film the idea he wants, he doesn't, it becomes the basis for discussion. I rather like this liberty because it is an advantage, as not of faith, which most of the time doesn't occur.

What is your working relationship with Sergio Leone?

There is a lot of talking, of listening to them. Quite frequently, everything is scribbled and we start again, logic vanishes. Often when everything has been accepted Sergio starts to doubt the decision and then more doubts come. It becomes a very complicated process that has to be entered. But it is quite normal that it should be like this, it doesn't upset me, or even bother me, because I mean that with a director in finally made it is the right one.

What about with Elia Petri?

There was something which happened on the last film of Elia Petri, *House of the Dead* (Good News), with Giancarlo Giannini and Angela Molina. She wanted me to write music, drawing on the spirit of a theme from Schubert's piano sonata. I listened to this sonata on a tape borrowed from the RAI

[The sonata has only recently been discovered.] So for final purposes I composed three variations for Petri, who was to refer just directly to the Schubert theme to interpret the grotesque quality and humor of the film. I wrote these three pieces, recorded them and then set about doing them with Petri.

But the editor, Ruggero Maccagnani, a friend of mine as well as of Elia Petri, said to me, "But the film disappears here because of the music." He was right. Petri and I agreed to scrap that music and I wrote other music which was recorded and cut, and worked very well.

It is not so if everything proceeds with someone else in the music. There is always a lot of talk. The difference between something which works well and something which doesn't is often quite small. If Ruggero's judgment in that case hadn't been so explicit and lucid, then the music for *House of the Dead* would have been that of Schubert rather than what subsequently was written. The film would have suffered.

What was the collaboration between you and Pier Paolo Pasolini like?

Very good. He was a quite extraordinary person in his manner of working. My first meeting with Pasolini happened through a mutual friend, his director of production, Enzo Cecchi. He called me in for Uccellini's work (The Hawks and the Sparrows), and Pasolini arrived with a lot of music that he wanted me to see, such as Meyer. I said to Pasolini, "Look I think you're making a mistake in calling me," because I wasn't one who applied, re-did or reworked music — I wrote it. So he said to me, "Okay, you are right, go ahead and do what you think." He let me do what I wanted and the only piece I had to re-do was a reference to a piece from "The Magic Flute" for two characters, and I remember which. He was very happy with

what I did and with the scores for *Cannibals*, *Tales*, *Amish Nights* and *The Decameron*.

I did very little of the music for *Sally*. Pasolini wanted music of the period and so I helped out, but it is not as if I wrote the music, it was more like a technical collaboration. The only piece of music, which is five or six minutes long, is the music of the peasant who attacks all these terrible situations and then eventually throws himself out the window. It is, shall we say, dodecaphonic.

I also reworked old music for *Cannibals*. There is virtually nothing of mine in *Cannibals*.

You have done so many different scores that you now must be able to treat just about anything...

I am capable of doing anything. This can also be negative in the sense that I could be accused of *quadruphonism* in lack of all shades and shades of tone. However, I believe that because I can do anything with a certain ease it makes me capable of supplanting fantasy and using spiritual technique more freely by saying what I do. I always have the possibility to express myself and so rediscover things. I would say that this is a kind of risk, because I am not a musician and composer limited to one thing, such as Western. Certainly I have had success with Western and I am perhaps better known for these than for other things. But I have done many things. Certain are films in the Indian cinema use music I have written, which is certainly worthy of respect.

Do you feel that today you are recognized more as a composer for the cinema?

Yes. Those who like me, who have heard me and who have studied me know that the other aspect also exists. But most people think I am a composer for the cinema and that is all. I would like everybody to know that I am something else. ★

**A
Practical
Film Student's
Guide to
Cliché**

Adrian Martin

Warning: this is a somewhat slanted review of some films made by student graduates in 1983 from the Swinburn Institute of Technology Film and Television School (Swinburn) and the Australian Film and Television School (AFPS). It makes no attempt to describe or evaluate the training offered to students at these institutions, nor does it enter the current debate about which is the better film and television school or which is more worthy of government money and public recognition. These questions are left to others with their fiery PR campaigns. The start of this article is that, whatever the differences that may be constructed through a comparison of the productions from the two schools, they put into lasting insignificance beside the learning outcomes.

In fact, after seeing the films and videos in a short space of time, they blur into one another more and more in the memory, so that one feels the need to give up, for a moment, the ghost of "Australian film" — the phantom of its fabulous future — and acquire a number of fundamental disappointments and painful feelings which relate not so much to these particular films, students, teachers, courses and institutions, but to a general problem in the Australian "film culture". (The words "film culture" are in quotation marks because, being neither the first nor the last person to attempt a diagnosis of some fundamental, nagging problem in Australian film, this author tends a wary path of critique which one feels still no longer that its very existence will serve a new, improved vision of tomorrow — a healthy, happy, diverse, smart, complex film scene in Australia.) These comments are stated fully, and a little sadly, in a tongue — the tongue of "social theatre" — as Rose Barley has so brilliantly dubbed it in a recent *Filmweek* article.¹ What is going to change as a result of anything remotely smart or penetrating that I as anyone will ever manage to say about Australian film? Not, I fear, anything coming out of Swinburn and the AFPS. This is, therefore, a risk to venture a general impression of a largely undifferentiated body of graduating student work. To begin with, a few wise words from Roland Barthes:

Usually the stereotype is a and after . . . it takes itself seriously, believes itself to be closer to the truth because indifferent to its nature as language. It is at once funny and solemn.²

"Corny and solemn": that is in good a description as anyone could formulate to cover most of the films under review. Perhaps a third word is necessary: "dumb". This is not to impute any particular lack of human intelligence on the part of the film- and video-makers involved, but rather to hint at on what is the overall conceptual problem which damages the work of many of their levels and causes pain for their audiences. This is not to speak of technical incompetence, which hardly ever arises (in the century, the works are mostly slick, pretty and "well crafted"), but of a more fundamental problem in the approach to the material: the

grasping of the supposed subject matter of the film or video. The problem is simply the massive resource, over and over again, to cliché and stereotype, a resource which appears, as far as one can sense it, to be an unconscious reflex on the part of those who conceive and execute the work. That unconsciousness is the really frightening thing to consider.

What is a "cliché" in this context? It is a completed, ready-made way of speaking or representing something, be it an image, a thought, a situation, an emotion or an idea. When a cliché appears in a film or video, it often reveals a failure on the part of its makers to think further than the immediate given situation as to how to say or show something. By "given" I mean given by the culture at large and, more particularly, by the more screen-based and narrated conventions, which dominate and define the use of the medium at hand. A cliché, in fact, is rarely wise to say anything precise or specific about a particular subject or idea; crappily, it points only toward, in its own comfortable reproduction of a cliché, away from underdetermined points-of-view. Clichés, by virtue of their thickness, tenacity and familiarity, form a kind of wall, a barrier between the film- or video-maker and the particular topic that he or she wishes to coach. The theme disappears altogether, leaving only an ugly patch of rote-worn audio-visual patterns — or, rather, the theme remains in a mangled, token form, a figure printed and carried by the resource to cliché.

Some readers will already be complaining, pointing to the example of Joseph Bugeanza's *Private and Confidential*. Surely here is a film,



Joseph Bugeanza's *Private and Confidential*: "the celebrated use of cliché on occasion from the exercise of intelligence and the experience of joy".

1. Rose Barley, "Local Degree Zero", *Filmweek*, May-June 1984, p. 4.
2. Roland Barthes, "Writing, Ideologies, Teachers", *Image Music Text*, Flamingo, London: 1977, p. 199.

the very subject of which is the clichés and stereotypes of the romantic comic book, rather than love itself or interpersonal relationships considered from a particular angle. True enough, this sprightly film is the notable exception to that argument, but the exception which, sadly, proves the rule. The strange which animates most of the other works under review is a resolutely serious one, "believing itself to be closer to the truth because indifferent to its nature as language". "Truth", here, takes the form of highly serious, "important" subject matter, but it is the sexual trauma of adolescence, the low-life angst of the junkie sub-culture or the struggles of brave individuals against the corrupt political system. These kinds of human themes are flung at the viewer with, at times, such overwrought earnestness that one might well imagine that the film- and video-makers really believe they are "doing something" for the first time in audio-visual history. The act of denouncing that history, of acknowledging the power of its pre-existing languages and conventions straight, only ever leads to its mechanical, mindless reiterations, carry and solemn, pure cliché.

The presence of cliché *per se* is not necessarily a bad and undesirable phenomenon. *Private and Confidential*, alongside any film by Jerry Lewis or Rainer Werner Fassbinder, exists to prove that the calculated use of cliché can question both the exercise of intelligence and the experience of joy. Clichés can be variously treated, played upon, exploited or transcended. There is no suggestion here that there is a "true", direct route to subject matter which simply bypasses the error of false clichés. However, anyone working towards a career in film or television simply has to be made aware of cliché, ingrained in the cold, pervasive waters of audio-visual history and convention, not to then always banish cliché (although this would help as a preliminary (naïveté) exercise), but to be able to recognize and use it precisely as a device, as a means of representation. It is a means towards an end which could be sighted and sought after a little more clearly than happens at present, for cliché, when unchecked, dooms every good intention and transforms most end-product into an inadvertent (crap joke).

What is offered, therefore, is a few meanderings across towards "A Practical Film Student's Guide to Cliché", evidence and examples gathered solely from the films and videos under review. Individual assessment of titles is not the aim here, for the asking problem of mindless cliché is rarely set out to be solved on up-and-coming film and television creations, but on Who? What? The available training at the schools? Film culture? Australian society? The road begins at the prospect of a decent analysis of the problem, let alone the recognition of a decent solution. Yet, some immediate good may come of an attempt to sort out a few of the clichés.

Cliché Subjects

1. *Teenage Sexuality* Sherry Walton briefly reviews, in the introduction to the APTS guidebook program, that this is a "contemporary social theme". Neither contemporary nor

social, the teenage sexuality theme offers a mishmash of newly-made clichés, exaggerated contrasts between the innocence of the child or teenager (wide-eyed, shy, yet curious) and the sexual decadence and deadliness of the adult world (decadence here translated into the homosexual guest of Amanda Fila's *Reaching Home Secret*, the extra-marital affairs of Dad in Jane Campion's *A Girl's Own Story*, the advanced, sexual activities of older brother in Paul Hogan's *Getting Wet*, and the mad uncle of Dianne Goss's *Uncle Robert*). To be fully cliché, this subject requires a gothic-looking house with large staircases and secret rooms, tense domestic scenes at the dinner table and many close-ups of the principal teenageer's eyeballs rolling in high anxiety. The intense experience of transsexual, sensitive individuals is, after all, the only thing which really matters to a modern filmmaker! *Getting Wet* scores points here for its adoption of a whinnical and successful rather than pseudo-tragic tone.



Top: Paul Hogan's *Getting Wet* - "a whinnical and successful rather than pseudo-tragic tone". Above: Jane Campion's *A Girl's Own Story*, teenage sexuality

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3. Alienation and Angst. This is another take on the extraordinary psychology of themes of Narcissism and cybolic-self-identity, which structure the producing works of 1983. Desolate, blank heroes and heroines wander through desolate, vaguely Sarsfield houses of life, unable to do anything but stare at sex (on a screen or through windows), various trilling forms of depravity, visions of their own impending death and magnificent fresh objects, such as mannequins in shop windows or Nixon paraphernalia. Nothing objectionable and nothing surprising are two remarkable popular features of current production. See Sarah Robert's *Flashpoint*, Scott McMillan's *Strangers by Order*, Christine Wadsworth's *Forgetting to Remember*, Jane Nighelli's *In Search of Visible Objects*, Mark Warren's *The Eden*, Peter Campbell's *Hot Hawthorn* and Sue Richter's *G'Day Love*. Relatively free of cliché, in the other hand, and provocatively intriguing in its portrayal of an interior mental state, is Gregory Wallace-Crabbe's *Wind Roads/ Wrong Ways*. *Holmes*.

3. Last Remaining Life at the End of The World. Exhilaratingly grotesque stranded in the cruel Aeneas desert of Peter Jordan's *Island Station* or literally (post-holocaust) bunker macabre of Tom Williams' *A Bag and a Whistle* — *End of the World*, this story should involve the motif of "man against nature", the principal characters turning more and more to savage territorial imperatives, and the basic survival urges and drives of sex and hunger. *Confront*, in an exaggerated fashion, civilized pop culture and primitive instincts. Screen the harshness of the environment as an unstable fashion throughout. Try to work on an allegory of all human life in a nutshell: the suburban Mom who naps and watches television in a constant trance, the fearful Puerto Rican father, the spooky young kid with Walkman at her ear and the savage, Mad Max male.

4. Trendy Social Issues. This is a rather open category and one that could be endlessly shuffled. What is at stake here is not the



Kyle Butler's *Sweet Dreams*: "relationship problems of single, career-oriented mothers and their teenage daughters"

particular issue, which could be handled in any number of possible ways, but the pot, *Four Camera-eyes*, 20-minute narrative formula which studies any burning social concern lump and taken. The plight of the aged in Wendy Thompson's *Home*; the relationship problems of single, career-oriented mothers and their teenage daughters in Kyle Butler's *Sweet Dreams*; the career aspirations of women in *G'Day Love*; the poisonous substance of political ideologies in Ray Quin's *September '91*; the tragic fate of Vietnam veterans back home in Kathy Mosler's *Every Day, Every Night*; the loss of identity of the unemployed experienced by the unemployed in Andrew Scott's *A Memoir*; the living-on-the-edge contrast of justice in Nick Lathouris' *But Whales for Bule's Annual*; and that old faithful suburban in Julie Morrey's *The Distance*. All these, no doubt serious and important, subplots tend to be reduced to the available screen time in the parent black or white, all glossy inevitability (death, decay or escape into catastrophe).



Gregory Wallace-Crabbe's *Wind Roads/Wrong Ways*: "Allegory 'grossly intriguing in its portrayal of an interior mental state'"



Ray Quin's *September '91*: "the poisonous substance of political ideologies"

fantasy or glory-eyed, Utopian resolution. Julie Merry's *Kindred* is the notable exception here, for, although covering a subject loaded with symbolic clichés of presentation (race and sexual blackmail), it manages to capture several fine, dramatic and thematic analogies in the area a poorer grey area between the black or white.

5. *Career Lamecy*. Neatly, cozy, whacky people — artists, of course — invent the world *around* us in the face of a traffic, conformist, establishment society. There are more exaggerated contrasts in relation, the artist or poet suffers the setback of introspection, but he or she is joined by a good mate and together they conquer all things. Much affected historicism is required for this cliché: frantic drama student lunatics, clowning, rock-on-ing, singing and over-making. See Jack White's *Abandonment* . . . *Frontal* and Valer Sadovskikh's *As the Crew Files*.

6. *The Individual versus the System*. A tough, individualistic reporter with a conscience works on a small-town newspaper for an inquisitive, conservative boss. The reporter goes in search of the Truth, suspecting a political conspiracy of immense magnitude and sinister implications (i.e., a cover-up). He speaks up, loses his job and is silenced by the mysterious mechanisms of power (see Jonathan Swift's *Next Time*, an interesting variation is provided by *Every Day, Every Night*). That is the standard plot cliché which allows the pose of "political comment."

7. *System of Consciousness*. This is a third type as *Western* movement subjectivity but this time focusing in somebody's or somebody's self-consciousness, or perhaps only the filmmaker's. In other words, it is an arbitrary, free-association chain of images or pictures or shocking or surreal or child-like images, or any combination of the aforementioned, justified as suggested or physical mental projection. See Noel Richard's *X* James J. Sully Prior's *Decomposition*. *By Darker and Farthing* *Mooning*. Attention is particularly prone to this very 1960's cliché, and it also prone

(particularly in its computerized form) to equally arbitrary hi-tech, space-age permutations of cubes and grids in space (Alister MacGregor's *Tangram* (1968)). Andrew Quisen's *Waltz* *Hawke* *delicious* self is the conspiracy by actually coming up with a few ideas as to what one might show or say in computer animation.

Cliche Devices

1. *Revolving and Simplistic Man*. What passes for a "creative touch" in *A Girl's Own Story* is the recurring reference to heaters which don't work or houses' been turned on — cold room, alarmed heart, get off! If you didn't get it during the unfolding of the story, there is a red-ink scene with a note "I feel the Cold", showing the principal characters huddled over hot heaters, just to make it quite clear at the end. In *J. Monroe*, the insurance, expressed unemployed state of suburban is compared with a bed he turns and sits her at the video's end, a supposedly jumpy statement about the possibility of freedom and escape borrowed from Ken Leach's *Kiss*.

2. *Engendered Contrasts*. As indicated above, absolute semantic oppositions between two lifestyles with no dramatic, dynamic combination between the two, unless marginally in a happy ending (for example, *Abandonment* . . . *Previous*, not required, however's own experience, child versus adult, conservative versus radical, civilized versus savage, vulgar versus refined and individual versus system are clear-cut oppositions which simplify dramatic problems emotionally and clear made potentially interesting tensions and overlaps. They also allow the filmmaker to position himself as herself freely and unapologetically on the positive side of the binary equation (as, for instance, a mutant, creature, free, radical individual).

3. *Caricature Standard Techniques*. These are for use in cutting, emphasizing a detail, or shifting into high or low gear. They are transposable devices which deal with movement, directly regularly from work to work, cutting from a silent fall at the end of one scene to a sudden violent cut at the beginning of the next, or bringing in a bit of sound from the next scene to go out of the present one. There is so much onscreen slow motion (for moments of violence, particularly, or facing poems in the plot) that one can hardly be expected to hear it. There are cliché "intra" and "extra" in predictable symmetry (for example, a cello shown from the toes to the throat close at the start, and back again to the toes at the end, many shots of car tyres) screaming to a halt in extreme close-up: eyeballs — also in extreme close-up — to signal subjective point-of-view, loads of echo and a tiny drum-machine on the soundtrack to signal an onscreen flashback, overhead shots of huge staircases, with characters fired like spiders at the bottom, framing through windows, sets and curtains — further motifs of conspiracy, and dominating, full-eye face close-ups to let you know a particular character should be thought of as rather grotesque. Virtually every film and video under review is complicit with this category of red-inked language cliché, revealing a startling similarity



A Girl's Own Story "cold room, alarmed heart" *I Feel the Cold*

to devote anything other than the most conventional production and post-production solutions to the minute-by-minute problems of representation and realization.

Cliché Styles

1. *Amateur*. There are several sorts, such as the Ken Loach style: includes muffled dialogue, group interaction in wide shot and narrative that has neither centre nor clear resolution, low key, "wonder on the world" stuff, so understated and self-effacing that it threatens to fade away into accidental insignificance (*September* '81 manages to succeed quite well in this style). More popular in this batch of works is the pseudo-cinema vérité fiction: a la Andy Warhol or John Cassavetes: ridiculous long takes, lots of random noise, aggressive probing camera and unacted provocation on the part of actors or characters. This is high-key, "you are there" realism which looks to take it becomes merely spectacularly grotesque (*Best Wishes for Baby's Arrival*, *G Day Love*).

2. *Postmodern*. This is a calculated, vicious, fairly unerring that particularly defines the "St Kilda sensibility" which is strong at Swinburne. Although this style has a fairly recent history, its cliché quotient is already quite high, providing budding, rough-and-ready improvisers with numerous reflexes for signaling how radical they think they are. These reflexes include crosscutting and writing on the film, large dollops of acceptance images in the montage; jett-pollard, up-shots, baroque set design; and an elaborate semiotics of over-top drug culture: dead-end, walls, tips, neo-mao-chism, blood, hoodlums, axes, burning light bulbs, pots, dark night with solitary conflagration, black clothes, factory noises and distorted synth-pop on the soundtrack. This style may very hard to be perceived as dirty and pervasively soulless but its intentions and posturing are as blatantly obvious as they are ludicrous. See Dave Permut's *Shit-Wham: A Woman Takes Her Clothes Off*, *N. Y. Streets 2*, *Sinners by Order* and *Forbidden Mornings*.

3. *Flamboyant, Prismatic Style*. This comprises no cocaine, no pills, shot-reverse shot, over lighting, strictly motivated camera movements, steady pace, establishing shots such as flippers or a landscape or as a score; dialogue as the primary component, and perfect clarity of statement, gesture and motivation at all costs, all of which is boring! Whatever happened to grace and framing, so the dynamic essence of yesterday, in works such as *The Blister*, *Sweet Stripes* and *Robert Chazot's The Mental Café*. Here, "style" in the conventional sense of the word — stylish style — is completely absent, presumably for the sake of some unnamed "system communication" from screen to audience. However, choosing to bear the yoke of predictable and bland flamboyance/cliché of presentation means that the "messages" to be communicated are never reinforced or expanded to the viewer in any gripping or involving way. Here, there is no constructive relationship between style and subject, form and content. At the other extreme is an equally unsatisfying solution to this style-subject conundrum



Kelly Muller's *Every Day, Every Night*: the Intellectual versus the System

4. *Expressionism*. This is when style goes crazy in every direction, over-reaching itself to make every scene intense, intimate, powerful and overwhelming. As much as its intentions and performances are admirable, *Every Day, Every Night* is a prime example of an over-the-top expressionism; the camera never stops moving, the soundtrack is mindlessly hyped-up with echo and loop, and the hysterical path never abates. The film tips over into some highly questionable and seemingly arbitrary technique in the name of non-stop expressivity: does one really need the sound of chopper blades in a *Apocalypse Now* and the brief archival burst of a muted "hey bell" stop everything shot? Nonetheless, the attempt at a meaningful, integrated style in *Every Day, Every Night* is, at least, adaptable to the point when it turns a long list of overthought, lyrical, filmic clichés that are, once again, merely spectacular or plausibly grotesque. At this point, the subject matter of the film suffers, indeed virtually disappears. Some of the other films manage a pleasantly integrated equilibrium of style and subject in parables, *Getting Wet* and *Kissed*.

This is a far from complex "Guide to Cliché"; it should be extended, critiqued and qualified. Above all, it should be used as some kind of tool for entrance in film and television training. This is, needless, a fantasy, but so cannot one be unrealistic. The lesson underlying it is this: that the Australian cinema might learn something from a little less "straight talk" in its overreliance and excesses of filmic ideas, and a little more rigorous self-consciousness.

Would some answers to cliché by our budding audio-visual artists be merely coping, wanky and self-conscious in the worst sense? I don't think so. As long as they remain aware of cliché, they are in a position — "metalinguistic" distance and lack of a dominant audio-visual language which they will continue to pretend they have mastered. Are they another generation of film and television workers at once petty and solemn? You can applaud that if you wish, I would still like to maintain the aim here that the future of the Australian cinema might turn out a little differently. ★

Jane Campion



*Jane Campion, an expatriate New Zealander who has lived in Australia for the past seven years, is a recent graduate of the Australian Film and Television School (AFTS). Her short films *Peel*, *A Girl's Own Story* and *Passionless Moments* (with Gerard Lee) have already attracted considerable attention and theatrical distribution. *Peel* was a finalist in the 1983 Greater Union Awards; *A Girl's Own Story* won the Rouven Mamoulian Award at the 1984 Sydney Film Festival and Best Direction in the Non-Feature section of the 1984 Australian Film Institute Awards; and *Passionless Moments* won Best Experimental Film at the same Awards. Campion is currently working on a project with the Women's Film Unit at Film Australia.*

Campion is interviewed by Mark Styles.

How did you get involved in films?

I was at Sydney College of the Arts, which is probably my greatest teaching influence. I had a fantastic time at the school. I had very old-fashioned ideas about art which I had picked up at home—you sort of do things—and that was what I wanted to learn. Art was all very mysterious: there were these wonderful paintings and you wanted to look at them for a long time without really knowing why. Art school knocked a lot of that out of me. It is not so much that it really changed me but that it made me rethink everything, which was pretty monumental at the age of 25.

After that, I decided I wanted to do work about things I was thinking about and involved in, which were generally relationships and love... and self. Previously, I would go to art school and draw, and I couldn't wait to get home and gossip about the intricacies of relationships and so on. Then I thought, "Why am I not doing my work about these things?" So I started making story paintings and it clicked that I was trying to tell stories.

Did you start writing?

Yes. I started writing plays, little performance pieces, and began putting them on. They were pretty



Top and above: Joan Compson and Gerard Lee in *Peel's Pleasant Myra*.

wild. I was up some of them but I was so humiliated when I saw the videotape I said, "Never again." And I thought how cravently the videotape was shot and that it was a shame.

The next thing I decided was that instead of doing it live I would make it on film or video. That is how I came to make *Timex* and how I became totally obsessed. I got the great Super-8 camera and I just taught myself. We did it double system Super-8 sound, which is really quite complicated, but it didn't seem to be any trouble at the time. I don't know why.

Did you shoot it?

No. People just seemed to turn up. I had imagined I would have to do it all myself. I went somewhere to find out about Super-8 and there would be someone else there and he would try, "Oh, I'll do sound if you like." I didn't even think about that to be honest — to put the microphone on a



Joan Compson's *Peel*. "The people at the APTS hated *Peel*. . . They told me not to bother finishing it."

chair or something — and suddenly there was a crew.

How did you feel about having a crew?

I was always worried about whether they would come, the arrangements were terribly casual. Sometimes they didn't!

Timex is one of my favorites actually. The subject matter and the tone is exactly the same as what I am doing now, but with a big movie style. It is a bit disturbing. I haven't made much progress!

And after that you went to the APTS. . .

After I made *Timex*, I tried to get some money from the Australian Film Commission (AFC) and I also tried to get into the APTS. I did a test scene for the APTS but they didn't like it. The APTS wanted me, even though they didn't like what I had made. They couldn't understand the humor in *Timex*. "Are we supposed to be laughing?", they asked.

What was your experience at the APTS?



Joan Compson's *Brother Information Awaits* winning *A Girl's Own Story*.

I fell in love with Gerard Lee, in my first year which was just great because I think I would have gone mad otherwise. The APTS was so boring and futile, the retrospectives wonderful. We sat of course and held hands all through classes and drove everybody mad.

I made an experimental video called *Misunderstanding* and *Conquest* about two brothers: one is climbing Mt Everest — that is Mulroy in the 1934 expedition — and the other is his fictional brother, who is trying to seduce a woman who is not very interested in him. It is the two styles of conquest. I was very moved by the way the men on the expedition talked about the mountain as though it had the qualities of a temptress: the closer you got to it the less you wanted it. It just seemed so much like the nature of desire.

I quite like the finished film. It has a nice feeling and is more sophisticated than some of my other stuff. But I hated it when I first finished it. I made it in a very open-handed way and everybody came and told me what a heap of shit it was. So I just kept working, trying to make it the best I could.

Your films are all very funny. There is a lovely sense of humor in "Peel" . . .

The people at the APTS hated *Peel* when they saw a first cut of it. They told me not to bother finishing it. I was quite vain so I found that really upsetting, but it was good for me. I cut out everything that was genuinely outrageous and made the film a bit better. The APTS people thought I was arrogant and was particularly irritated. There were people there more talented than I was, but my talent wasn't the kind they were going to understand, which was one of the luckiest things for me.

Why?

They tried to work the people they think are talented; they glorified them. But if they are critical of you, or don't like you, they leave you alone and that means you release yourself. They don't stop you, they don't say, "This is too rude. Don't put it in your film." There is no censorship at the APTS, there is just harassment.

I don't mean to be too harsh about the APTS. Everyone wants the APTS to exist, one just wants it to be better.

"*Peel*" is about a sub-headed beauty which goes for a drive in the country, has an argument and is too stubborn to give it and go home. What was it like working with sub-headed actors?

At a certain stage things happened rather quickly. Kate Pryor said, "You are the best bit of me of my whole life and day because I am not coming out here again!"

What was great about the story was that they were honest enough to play themselves. I have a lot of respect for them because of that. We are all much closer for what we went through.

How did you cast the children in "A Girl's Own Story"?

After *Peel*, I learned the lesson that it is really good to have people who are really interested in a career in film. Otherwise, no matter how good they are, if you can't afford to pay them they get terribly pissed off.

So, on *A Girl's Own Story*, I went to all the drama groups in Sydney. I also rang up some secondary schools and talked to their drama teachers, went to school plays and things like that. I met one girl in a coffee shop. It took a long time. A few people didn't want to do certain roles, like the girl who gets pregnant to her brother. The girl I originally cast couldn't handle it. She was a very innocent girl, which was what the part called for and she would have been perfect, but I didn't want

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Kathy Mueller



Kathy Mueller was born in Cleveland, Ohio, one of 11 children of a working-class Catholic family. She came to Australia in 1970 and taught Art, Craft, Music and English at a high school in Warialda in New South Wales. There she started pulling on plays and making Super 8 films with her students. She then taught Aboriginal children on a cattle station, Ebey, in the Northern Territory before moving to Canberra and, finally, Melbourne.

Mueller's graduating film from the Swinburne Institute Film and Television School, *Every Day, Every Night*, won the GUD award in Sydney this year for Best Short, Best Sound at the 1984 Australian Film Institute Awards and was voted Best Short at the Montreal Film Festival this year.

Mueller was interviewed by Helen Greenwood while in pre-production for a tele-feature, *Emerging*, that she is directing for the ABC.

While I was in Darwin, I did some acting and also wrote my first play. It is based on my experiences in the Northern Territory, and one day, when I got my craft together, I will make it into a film. Then I moved to Canberra where I was offered another acting job, cultural and children's theatre. But I decided I didn't want to be an actor, I wanted to be a director.

A lot of the directors I had worked with didn't know what they were doing. They would spend all their time playing power games rather than getting on with the truth of the script. It was just a big joke to them. I was talking about theatre, not film.

Anyway, there was no directing

creme at the time so I had to do acting. I went to the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) so to do a drama course there — a golden pig year so it was the first year. It was a real satisfying, very satisfying. It was a growing period in many ways.

Why did you decide to move into directing films rather than directing for the stage?

When I graduated from the VCA I was asked back as a lecturer. During my years there I became aware that theatre was reaching fewer people. It never really reached the public — the people whom I wanted to reach. My

parents, for instance, would never go to theatre but they might go to see a film.

I also found that actors who would give a brilliant performance one night would then go through a slump and their performance would go down. One never quite achieves the vision one has in the head when shooting. I wanted to have a farmer and film was the natural answer.

At that time I also started writing. Being a director and writer is about having creative control — but not power. I am only just coming to terms with that word.

There is a fine line between power and control: perhaps what you are talking about is control and discipline . . .

I am talking about exploitation versus aspiration. You can aspire people to do what you want, but to manipulate or control them is a way which is against their will obviously becomes a power game. It is a distinction Australians especially are very afraid of making. So are most people in the world. That is why there is constant oppression in this world.

I am very fascinated by the power of oppression: how power oppresses others who haven't discovered their personal power, the constant struggle between the oppressed and the oppressor. That conflict is what drama is all about.

I don't understand the power games people play or why they are playing them, but I want you to come to the fact they exist. That is, I suppose, why I have a good sense of dramatic build. Trying to write about those power games is impossible, but directing and understanding comes intuitively to me.

How does that relate to "Every Day, Every Night"?

Power and oppression are most toxic when they are in a form you can't see. For instance, you never know all the reasons for which governments and nations decide to go to war till years after, and even then it is covered up. But that is what power is about: they can tell you that you must fight, what your life must be, but they never take the responsibility for the consequences. Power and responsibility go together, but it is very easy for someone in power to forget the responsibility when it comes to paying the dues.

Is that what you are trying to point out in "Every Day, Every Night"?

To point that out would be dramatical, and I don't feel I have that right. All I can do is to express what I feel.

I work in terms of feeling and I am constantly fighting a battle



Recreating the nightmare life of a Vietnam war veteran's wife. Spike (David Byrne) loses control and rapes his wife Nora (Kathy Acker) in the scene. Kathy Acker's *Every Day, Every Night*.

between the mind and the heart, which helps dream to hold its will. I get very annoyed that the individual is told what he should do, and then is left to suffer the consequences. The outrage is very real, but I don't have the answers. So I simply try to make other people aware of situations or express for them their sense of outrage, which then becomes catharsis.

But in "Every Day, Every Night" there are some very powerful images, a lot of dramatic camera-work and strong sound effects. The film is exceptionally melodramatic and certainly veering towards being distortional . . .

I would not want to be distortional, I want to be heard. If someone expresses themselves emotionally, it can't be called distortional unless it is done in cultural terms. I don't find the film as big as political. If someone else does, that is valid, if it lifts them with their head rather than their gut, fine, but I was working from my gut when I made it. I absorbed a lot of information which really shocked me, so it ended up in the film in terms of images and emotions. I warned people to be as honest as I was when I discovered what was going on.

When you have nightmares or recurring dreams, you are haunted by images, feeling, post, and sounds which create another image that takes you somewhere else. So the flashbacks came out of seeing

the movements in my mind, recreating Van's (Carolyn Howard) nightmare. But it wasn't a thought-out process. It just happened. I knew the fact, but I didn't really have time to plan shots. I was still trying to raise money and find locations until the day before the shoot.

Do you think there is a documentary style in the way the film is shot?

If you want to call it a documentary, fine. I don't care what people call it. I simply was going with whatever shots would create the mood I wanted.

Film as like a Freudian's line: it can be so destructive and yet so enlightening, it can be a tool for learning and a tool for manipulating or breaking. It is like a weapon. It is quite frightening what it does to young audiences in terms of violence and sex, but it also can inspire and allow people to make great movies for culture.

But there is a lot of melodrama in my work. I like Lina Wertmüller's work because you can really get into the outrage, you can say things that normally wouldn't be able to be said because they are taboo or they are not meant to be said if you are sophisticated. Film is such a sophisticated medium and people like to label you or wipe you because you are not sophisticated, because you are not using the medium as it has evolved to its heights.

But you can go to the heights of melodrama, of the descriptive genre, of anything . . .

Sure, but melodrama is definitely out. If you read the critic and they label something as "highly melodramatic" it is usually as a slur.

Would you say, though, that melodrama is the best way of expressing yourself?

No. I am everything in melodramatic terms and I am terribly melodramatic and excessive in my own life. Melodrama balanced with black humor and pathos is probably the best way of expressing myself. I would like to move towards black comedy, in which one can be outrageous and also suitably solemn.

How did you come into contact with the story?

I was researching and writing another feature film script, and I needed one of my characters to be a Vietnam veteran. I went to the Veterans' Veterans' Return Office and the woman was in the middle of taking suicide phone calls — it was an incredible drama. I just couldn't get away for an hour because I was talking to her and we were continually interrupted by phone calls. I just walked away totally devastated by this woman's life. Here was I, writing this little

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New Products and Processes

Fred Harden

There have been several new product releases from Kodak in the past six months which, because of Cinema Papers' publication schedule, have not been reported in the "New Products" section. To redress this, the following is an interview with David Welfi, the marketing manager for the Motion Picture and Audio Visual Markets of the Kodak office in Coburg. However, the discussion soon left the new products and turned to the marketing of those products, an area about which most of us have wondered (or worried) at some time. How does Kodak rate the film industry as customers? An industry as unpredictable as the film industry places demands on suppliers that are different from many other areas of business and Kodak has coped with a varying degree of success over the years.

There are many things that are different about the film industry as compared to other industries. For example, in the film industry, such as in the case of Kodak, the customer is not always the end user. In the case of Kodak, the customer is the distributor, who is the one who is responsible for the distribution of the film. In the case of Kodak, the distributor is the one who is responsible for the distribution of the film. In the case of Kodak, the distributor is the one who is responsible for the distribution of the film.

There had been comment at Kodak for some time that there was a need for high-speed negative film. In the case of Kodak, the customer is not always the end user. In the case of Kodak, the customer is the distributor, who is the one who is responsible for the distribution of the film. In the case of Kodak, the distributor is the one who is responsible for the distribution of the film.

Today, there is even less reason to be complacent because people have how to make filmstock, and our competitors can do a very good job. We now have to make sure that we keep whatever technological lead we can. We also have to continue to provide a hell of a lot of other services to make sure that we are really going that product some added value in the market.

That is where the small manufacturer can always come in and cut you out of the market, by servicing it better...

It can. But we have got to be successful world-wide in maintaining our position. It is a bit of a

lot of hard work. Some attitudes have really had to be inculcated into all sorts of people to overcome the complacency.

The marketplace picks up very quickly when a company is heard and being...

Yes. So we have done a lot of things, but not just with the product itself. We have the technology leadership but I don't believe that the other products are bad at all. A lot of people wouldn't be able to tell the difference between them and ours under ideal circumstances. What happens when circumstances are not ideal is a different matter entirely. So we spend a lot of money, in the US in particular, in the development of new products and, more important, the continued improvement of existing ones. It is not often realized, for example, that the 3207 stock underwent major improvements, as did 3207, for many years.

As a user, one gets tired of it very soon when one starts something back and the printer begins to change, but that is about it...

That particularly happens, as it did last year, when we are out of sync with stocks of film, basically because the feature industry has fallen in a heap and we have an excess. The film didn't age but

there was a gradual process of change, so that when you had a batch of one type of film versus a batch of another there was an apparent difference. The fact of the matter was that when it was finally on the screen there was no difference, but it is a damn nuisance that it should happen in the first place.

The film industry is at the mercy of Kodak because it needs its products. It is a high level of trust and any violation is taken as a personal slight. People are quick to criticize on that basis...

Yes, and I am not certain that there haven't been times when the criticism may have been justified. It doesn't matter how big or how small the company is, if it makes up of people. A company has an attitude, a sort of culture, and different companies have different cultures. We used to deal with one company in Britain where the approach seemed to be a whole — there was always something wrong. Everyone you talked to is that company was the same.

I have worked as a customer, admittedly not in the motion picture field, but as a professional film laboratory nine years ago in Britain, and I know how you screw up your business. But one of the reasons I work for Kodak is I believe we are mutually honest in our dealings and we do our best, although every now and then we manage to get off the track.

We may have, in the past, become extremely arrogant. I think it happened after World War 2 when there was considerable supply problems. If you wanted a roll of film, the attitude was, "You'll be lucky!" That attitude, unfortunately, prevailed for some and may have been seen as arrogant. I joined the company in 1958 and there was a realisation of that, the customers are a damn nuisance, and all that sort of thing.

There was also a phase in the mid-1970s when we had started, as many companies did, on a computerised stock control push, and things were rationalised by members. It made it easier because you could do an extended analysis on

how to save money. Nevertheless, as a journalist used to me the other day, "I can remember times in the early- or mid-1970s when you would ring up Kodak and be asked 'Well, what's your customer number?' and 'What's your cost number?' Everything was done by members, and we could have complete conversations to members." There is still some of that around, but a lot less.

Teddy, we seem to be focusing much more on the service aspects. An example is our magazine, *Amateur*, which is an attempt to reach more people. We have a logistics problem: how in the hell do you talk to many thousands of people? In our case, we have only a few representatives scattered throughout Australia. We are not going to be able to talk to everybody. I would never be 100 per cent confident that if a customer rang up we were going to give the right answer or the right response at the time. But I believe fervently that that has to be second nature for everybody at Kodak. Again, you are dealing with human beings, and sometimes even customers can be a little unfortunate in their attitudes, to say the least.

What percentage of Kodak's market is motion picture products?

About 10 or 12 per cent of the total market in Australia, but we also have a substantial export market on top of that.

So, in the Australian market, Kodak's profit is made up of 18 per cent from motion pictures?

We never discuss it in terms of profit but it is not as unprofitably profitable area like home arc. On the other hand, it is important for the company. The company management considers that it is as important as all the other lines of business, and the resources we put into it are not disproportionate. It is fair to say that it is not as profitable as many would like to think and we don't have the kind of manoeuvring that allows us to go through dealers or to cut prices by 10 or 15 per cent or something like that.

We are also fairly closely tied in pricing, via a set of the American prices. We keep our prices very close to the American prices, and they sell direct as well, but we suffer if the U.S. dollar is strong, since it is a deflating power at the moment, it is keeping the price high here. It is not so helpful to the Americans either. I don't think the exporters like it in the U.S.

Which is, perhaps, the reason Australia felt they are the poor cousin, when they see the new products being introduced across continents 12 months before they came here, or the situation in which Australians are being a problem which is being phased out overseas but its replacement hasn't arrived here. . . .

That is less true today. It certainly has been true for, generally speaking, where a product is available at the U.S. we will have it within four to five months. It is a company policy to have products available here as quickly as possible.

Now, the constraints we have on being able to make an immediate introduction lead to legends. We still have to ship the product over, which usually takes 12 to 13 weeks by the time they pack and send it. And we also, unless we are extraordinarily clever, have an inventory here of the discontinued product, since nobody else would want the motion picture industry is going to do.

One thing that we don't want to do is to run out of stock. We do, occasionally, because of these very variables. The other thing that occasionally happens is a yada yada of a product in the U.S. and, as the motion picture industry has probably the fastest turnover of any that I know, our trade fair immediately gets interpreted as being generally available, which it isn't.

I can certainly get a theatrical, if you recall, we introduced a fast track, 3290. It was not a bad film (stock), and certainly equal to the Fuji products then available, although they have changed now as well. In the U.S., they missed 3290 and we had some extent of 3293. But all of a sudden people who would have bought '93 in previous to the Fuji products, or would not have used the Fuji products if '93 were available, said that if they couldn't get 3294 they would prefer Fuji to '93. We have since discontinued it, and we have some left. What people don't know is that in the long run everybody pays for it, because it cost as much as thousands of dollars and we had to resuspend those costs somewhere. So what do we do? The cost is spread over a range of materials. It is ridiculous, but that is what happens!

It is also an emotional thing in

terms of what you touched on earlier by saying that filmmaking is an art, a craft, and not that much a science except when it gets into the laboratory. Not every director of photography knows the technology of film as well as he should if they were in the printing industry they would have to know exactly what is behind the color. It is a great shame that they don't know what a silver halide crystal is, or what latitude of exposure means, or that there is a trade off always between grain and speed, or what exposure index you use.

Usually they are not given enough time to do test and rarely do they do tests of their own accord. . . .

Maybe we have to try and help them in an educational process. We have an educational role through film and television schools where we help with information on all sorts of things to do with production—special sensitivity, sensitivity, etc. I understand the argument that in the end it is what you see on the screen but sometimes you can make a cut go better if you know how the expert works or at least you can do it better. But we have some areas in which we can help, such as information about T-grain developments.

The Tigrine resolution was introduced in the VN range of still film. . . .

Yes. It is only in the stills area at the moment, but we target the technology may be extended into other areas such as motion pictures. We certainly feel that film has to continue to improve and be used, and that it is not going to be all electronics. There are some critical areas in the middle where post-production is going more into tape. Initially, industrial film users, who also use video, get better results than the new technicians in video who don't understand images in the same way that a film person, who has had to use all the subtleties of lighting and filtration, etc., does. How many times can you pick out on television the flat highlighting of video versus the quality look that the R9C documentaries get from 16mm film?

There is a problem also with engineers, who are twiddling a lot of knobs and who don't know anything about craft, again. "This is my particular domain, and I am not going to let you bugger know what the hell is going on."

On the dispute that leads one to ask "Which master do I look at?" . . .

You just touched on another problem. There is no standard in motion. The best that you can do is get some sort of standard of con-

stant, but you can't do anything else because there is not even a standard of colored phosphors. Where do you go from there? And how many people do you see looking at a monitor to judge what the lighting is going to be like? They are being trained to get the film look.

Video, obviously, is going to have an even more spectacular growth, with more demands for program material. It is great for so many parts of the process, but it shouldn't be an either/or situation. Unfortunately, it is, so occasional, and, regrettably, the cost has never really been down properly. On the other hand, we gave in all too readily and didn't promote film for what it was until very recently. My American colleagues really gave up, for example, on the news film area for too early.

When there was the attempted assassination of Ronald Reagan some time ago, there wasn't one film camera at the scene, other than the still photographers. It was all ENG video and, although it was immediately available, by the time Australia took the satellite feed, and added a slow-motion replay with electronic enhancement, the result was a messy mess. This is the real tragedy to have his history recorded visually; how much more telling, how much more impact it would have if it were all transferable to high-quality mediums such as videotape or HDTV! Yet, there will be a period of probably 30 years which will be visually dead, where all there will be is low-resolution videotape of our news events. At least film allows us to keep our options open. . . .

It is interesting to transpose the events and speculate on what would have happened if we had invented video back in George Eastman's time and if we had only recently invented film. Obviously film would have been hailed as an incredible invention suddenly here is something on which you can see everything, from which you get a

tremendous picture and which is highly sensitive — it is interesting to speculate on our reaction to film under those circumstances.

How much influence does Australia have on product development?

Nowadays, Kodak in Australia is being asked to participate in trade trials to provide feedback on response to what the product looks like and how it behaves. Along with some other countries in Europe, Australia is recognized as being a sophisticated country with high-quality standards being imposed in the film industry. I was visiting a laboratory in the U.S. some years ago, and when I said I came from Australia, they said, "Oh God, that's the only country we had trouble with. The quality standards are too high." You should see some of the rubbish that comes out of the U.S. today.

We have a research laboratory which does work in other areas, and is involved in the manufacturing side. We don't manufacture motion picture film here but we do have in our research laboratory a group called Motion Picture Technical Services, which consists of four people who are in any area of responsibility. They are there partly as what we call photo-technicians, partly as a testing area, partly as an educational area, and partly as an advice and service area. They conduct laboratory surveys and will work with cameramen if there is a particular problem. If there is a complaint we will bring the cameraman to the laboratory and try and sort it out.

We are not here to appease blame but to try and find out where the problem is, if there is a problem. We also send this group anywhere in the country at our expense, and it is a service that is well appreciated by the laboratories. I am not sure that cameramen even know that they get better quality results on the screen because of the work that these people do. *

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Debut	Debut album	Associated labels
1965	<i>Debut</i>	Mercury
1966	<i>Debut</i>	Mercury
1967	<i>Debut</i>	Mercury
1968	<i>Debut</i>	Mercury
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2019	<i>Debut</i>	Mercury
2020	<i>Debut</i>	Mercury
2021	<i>Debut</i>	Mercury
2022	<i>Debut</i>	Mercury

January 1999

Figure 1

South Africa	38 years
Switzerland	40 years
Taiwan	40 years
Tanzania	40 years
Togo	40 years
Turkey	40 years
Uganda	40 years
Ukraine	40 years
United Kingdom	40 years
United States	40 years
Uruguay	40 years
Venezuela	40 years
Zambia	40 years
Zimbabwe	40 years

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PRODUCTION

Journal of Management Education 34(10)

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Language	English/Italian
Occupation	Marketing/Advertising
Location	Florida, Northwest Florida, Pa. U.S.
Year completed	March 1977
Project	Ad. Eval.
Employer	Preparation
Equipment	Training, videotaping, electronic
Ad. employer experience	10 years
Ad. employer's field	Advertising

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Second	... 2nd Prize
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Fourth	... 4th Prize
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Eighth	... 8th Prize
Ninth	... 9th Prize
Tenth	... 10th Prize
Eleventh	... 11th Prize
Twelfth	... 12th Prize
Thirteenth	... 13th Prize
Fourteenth	... 14th Prize
Fifteenth	... 15th Prize
Sixteenth	... 16th Prize
Seventeenth	... 17th Prize
Eighteenth	... 18th Prize
Nineteenth	... 19th Prize
Twentieth	... 20th Prize
Twenty-first	... 21st Prize
Twenty-second	... 22nd Prize
Twenty-third	... 23rd Prize
Twenty-fourth	... 24th Prize
Twenty-fifth	... 25th Prize
Twenty-sixth	... 26th Prize
Twenty-seventh	... 27th Prize
Twenty-eighth	... 28th Prize
Twenty-ninth	... 29th Prize
Thirtieth	... 30th Prize
Thirty-first	... 31st Prize
Thirty-second	... 32nd Prize
Thirty-third	... 33rd Prize
Thirty-fourth	... 34th Prize
Thirty-fifth	... 35th Prize
Thirty-sixth	... 36th Prize
Thirty-seventh	... 37th Prize
Thirty-eighth	... 38th Prize
Thirty-ninth	... 39th Prize
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Fifty-seventh	... 57th Prize
Fifty-eighth	... 58th Prize
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Sixtieth	... 60th Prize
Sixty-first	... 61st Prize
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Sixty-third	... 63rd Prize
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Sixty-fifth	... 65th Prize
Sixty-sixth	... 66th Prize
Sixty-seventh	... 67th Prize
Sixty-eighth	... 68th Prize
Sixty-ninth	... 69th Prize
Seventieth	... 70th Prize
Seventy-first	... 71st Prize
Seventy-second	... 72nd Prize
Seventy-third	... 73rd Prize
Seventy-fourth	... 74th Prize
Seventy-fifth	... 75th Prize
Seventy-sixth	... 76th Prize
Seventy-seventh	... 77th Prize
Seventy-eighth	... 78th Prize
Seventy-ninth	... 79th Prize
Eightieth	... 80th Prize
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Eighty-fourth	... 84th Prize
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Eighty-eighth	... 88th Prize
Eighty-ninth	... 89th Prize
Ninetieth	... 90th Prize
Ninety-first	... 91st Prize
Ninety-second	... 92nd Prize
Ninety-third	... 93rd Prize
Ninety-fourth	... 94th Prize
Ninety-fifth	... 95th Prize
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Greater Union Awards Best Short Film
Screened at 1984 Melbourne Film Festival
1984 AFI Awards Nominated for
Best Short Fiction Film
Best Achievement in Direction
Best Achievement in Sound
1984 AFM Award
Best Tertiary student production
1984 AFM Award
Jury Prize Cinematography

Joseph Rogalsky "Private and Confidential"

1984 Melbourne Film Festival
Diploma of Merit
1984 AFM Award
winner Most Innovative Category

Peter Jordan "Wanna Station"

Screened at 1984 Bilbao Film Festival
Screened at 1984 Oberhausen Film Festival
Screened at 1984 Tyneside Film Festival
1984 Melbourne Film Festival Special Award

Georgia Wallace-Crabbe "Wetwage"

1984 Melbourne Film Festival Irwin Road Prize
Nominated 1984 AFI Awards for Best
Experimental Film

Andrew Quinn "Waltz Nambro"

Nominated 1984 AFI Awards for Best
Animated Film



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productions coordinate through
the Australian Film Institute

Once Upon a Time in America

Rolande Caputo

"So we hear on, hear against the curtain, have it back suddenly into the past."

*—F. Scott Fitzgerald
The Great Gatsby*

1933. "Noodles" (Robert De Niro) enters a Chicago theatre through a second-story window. He places briefly to detect in the shadowy puppet show below, then moves on to the open air. A Chinaman takes her overcoat at Noodles' arm as a shyly waitress. His face strongly expressive. As he toys with the ring of his finger, the Chinaman pretends the open page. Noodles survives out on the matinee, lying on his side. He pulls a handkerchief under his head, takes the eye and smiles and, after several weeks, falls on his back. That is a change of costume style to a high-angle, profane close-up, with expressive, the face is finally taken away by a dark. From there. Secondly later, the red matinee begins rolling superimposed on De Niro's smiling face. Approximately seven months of terror past, it is one of the most beautiful scenes ever produced by the cinema, and the last shot is a typically seductive suggestion and revealing as the famous close-up of *Greta Garbo*'s face at the end of *Queen Christina* (1933).

In the dawn of so film reviews I have said, this scene hardly requires meaning. For Neil LaBute, the scene is surely proof of what he calls the film's "poisonous darkness." For *Maxine Morgan*, the scene doesn't exist at all, the ending for her scenes is a prior accident.

Still, even in the end Leone can combine De Niro with a perhaps look to create a few minutes of diaphanous scene. It's a fine conclusion for a single film saved only by an unpleasant flourish of violence from its film as a movie told on.

Ever better, for Lee McCallie, the film "... begins and ends with a dream-induced dream sequence." The fact that the film does not begin with Noodles in the open air or that there are no narrative elements which indicate the dream mode seems irrelevant to McCallie's understanding of the film. Without this unfair, one could say that the film scene of Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in America* remains, for most viewers, either unacknowledged or a better mode, and only turned on to a film with a less than conventional narrative structure.

The film's narrative structure — the broad narrative between the periods 1921, 1933 and 1950 — has itself come under significant criticism. The primary implications which the time shifts impose on the plot¹ or

... have never seem to be any special reason for any particular shift except once an effect — or a set of events, increasingly chaotic and silly. It also makes the film full

again into an array of loosely connected chunks?

much of the confusion about *Once Upon a Time in America* seems from a certain critical anxiety to understand why the film is so much and why it is, and why Leone chooses to condense the scenes with such a supposedly negative result.

To address the issue of the film's narrative structure and scenes, some first *Maxine Morgan*, so he admits, is out of the few who attempt to set an certain literary antecedents for the film's narrative structure.

It is a type of narrative which almost forms a point in itself is a broad-based version of the somewhat sensory world-views of social and personal nature. Its main literary precursors look into high-class postmodern, like William S. Burroughs or John Ford — and so it is pointed to be the perfect style for Leone to choose for a gangster dynasty story with a forty-year span.

The reluctance to Leone's film is implicitly correct. Leone's film is the modern-modernist narrative of *Jackie a Chorus* and *The French Law* (1933). It would be more accurate to say that Leone's film is an attempt to combine two distinct, but in fact, interconnected, literary traditions represented within the American novel of the early 20th Century. One tradition is that associated with authors such as Jack London, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Thomas Wolfe, who were aware of the American South as a nation. The second is that associated with authors such as Jack London, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Thomas Wolfe, who were aware of the American South as a nation. The second is that associated with authors such as Jack London, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Thomas Wolfe, who were aware of the American South as a nation.

When this context, it should be remembered that Leone's original script of 13 or more years ago was entitled "Once Upon a Time, There Was America", "America", therefore, was also the central character of the film. The short-movie-length version, together with scenes such as "F. Scott Fitzgerald, Dashiell Hammett, and Raymond Chandler, and the American writers would have Leone with the main narrative for him to acknowledge his own indebtedness to American literature. The greatest reason in the film suggests the parallel displacement from the obsession with America to other themes.

The film does clearly involve its literary antecedents in its meticulous recreation of the Jewish quarter in the Lower East side of New York in the 1920s. The art direction and photography combined to create a new cinematic effect under the film of a cinematic literary past, and the film's literary antecedents are a whole literary past based upon the difference, e.g., the novels of Alton Robbe, G.K. Chesterton, and so on, and that the image has the capacity to simultaneously render attractive and



Top: the young "Noodles" (Robert De Niro) and his situation. Bottom: *Once Upon a Time in America*. The film's title scene is the film's title scene of the Lower East side of New York in the 1920s. Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in America*.

1. The Age, 8 October 1984.
2. The American Cinematographer, 12 October 1984.
3. Rolling Stone, No. 380, December 1984.
4. New York, The Age, 20 April.



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Agosto García (left) as Orsini, Juan and Gustavo Posadas (Pedro Pablo Kuczajski) inside the Town Hall. *Fanny Dity Little War*

confession, during the fighting, when Mayor Gaglianini denounces an unconstitutional plot against Colonel Vela, a journalist asks, "Do you think the Army might be useful?" (to which Gaglianini answers, "Bitch! What country do you think we are in?") Later, a conservative, openly-repudiated Posadas is told that it looks like the Army is coming, to which he replies, "The Army? Then we are saved?" A radio program (that contains the news of the battle in Colonia Vela and approximately plays Carlos García's tape), "Mi Buenos Aires Querido" ("My dear Buenos Aires"). The original title of the film, *No habéis matado a nadie*, is a quote from this song.

*Mi Buenos Aires querido
Cuando yo te vierte a ver
No habéis matado a nadie!*⁸

The song is heard almost to its entirety, as background to one of the last sequences in the film, *Historia Supina*.

8. "My dear Buenos Aires
When I see you face
There will be no forgetting
Or forgetting."

and Gaglianini. Supina says, "It was a big mess. The military don't like civilians shooting things up without that permission", and this turns out to be a sour comment on Argentina's long history of military interventions.

It is interesting that in the film the Posadas Youth decides to back Posadas, being a natural ally of the Left Wing of the party, this was to be expected, but their decision to do so by kidnapping Commissioner Llanos (and not of joining the battle at the Town Hall) is significant, it can be regarded as direct reference to the 1970 Montoneros' kidnapping and execution of General Aramburo.

The movie portrayed in *Fanny Dity Little War* can also be better understood if one considers the long period for which the Posadas were caged from elections, and the many military coups (including one headed by Posadas' son) within that period. The division within the party became unresolvable, Posadas' populist policies of "social justice" were deemed to be both Conservative and Progressive views, by both wings of the party, and the radicalization of these views led to an irreconcilable clash

Olivera, whose previous films include *La Patagonia rebelde* (Buenos Aires, 1977) and *Los Vientos de la sierrita* (Buenos Aires, 1981) — and also Adolfo Aristarain's *Tiempo de revueltas* (Tina Turner, 1984), as a producer — based *Fanny Dity Little War* on a novel written by Osvaldo Soriano, who himself led to go into exile. Federico Luppi, who plays the role of Posadas, is one of the most popular and talented Argentinean actors, and has also had problems in his country because of his socialist leanings. Two other key aspects of the film are Leonardo Rodriguez Solar's photography and Oscar Cardozo Ocampo's music: both add to the strength and dramatic effect of the production.

One particular sequence stands out and summarizes Olivera's approach to the scene at the school, which after about sixteen pictures of Argentina's political history, drawings made by school kids and appalling details of Gaglianini's thugs' worse techniques.

Olivera's success with this film is the result of his combination of comedy to entertain the viewer, and his attempt-

ed use of brutal and almost graphic violence to shock the viewer and remind him that serious things should not be forgotten — or forgotten is a direct reference to the film's original title.

Fanny Dity Little War Directed by
Federico Luppi. Producers: Fernando
Arita, Luis O. Ripstein. Associate
producer: Aldo Jara. Screenplay: Roberto
García, Jorge Olvera. Director of photo-
graphy: Leonardo Rodríguez Solar.
Editor: Eduardo López. Production
designer: Emilio Bussalini. Music: John
Cardozo Ocampo. Costas Cardozo Ocampo.
Sound: Juan Carlos. Costume: Carlos.
Cin. Edgardo López. Makeup: Juanito.
Hair: Roberto Ocampo. Visual Effects:
Fuentes, Roberto. Music: Juanito.
Llanos: Miguel Ángel Solís (Llanos), John de
García (Posadas), Luciano Marín
(Gaglianini), Gerardo (Pérez), Pablo
Fuentes, Ulises (Buenos Aires), Rod
Kern (Juan Imperio Aramburo), Arturo
Melo (Tina), José María López (García).
Production office: Arca. Completion
Office: Distribuidora José María. 15 min.
32 mm. Argentina, 1985. ■



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Angela Punch McGregor

Continued from p. 431

he exists on the very much pricier budget of the Frenchness of Hollywood. He is a perfect gentleman, but very isolated and very shy. Unfortunately, I didn't get to talk with him that much about his life and career.

The funniest day was our last scene. We were both embarrassed, I said, "Do you think of the money on these days?" and he said, "Come on, Billy, I am a French lover."

What do you think of your performance in this film?

I don't think of it much at all. I was nervous.

Considering that you have been in so many Australian films with a foreign actor and an overseas film, what is your opinion on the Actor's Equity stand of limiting foreign actors into this country?

I have come full circle on this issue. Six years ago, I thought that the good international stars should be imported, because I thought that we could learn a lot from them and improve the standard not only

of acting but also of our films in general.

Now, I have come to the reverse opinion. Because I have lived overseas I have realized that it is the Australian idiom and idiosyncrasies which are fascinating American and the rest of the world. It is the film and its context which is stimulating attention, not who is in it.

As film actors, we have reached an international standard whereby we stand on our own and are no longer overseas. The spectators have to learn that, and it must be impressed upon them that Vanessa Redgrave in an Australian film will not tell if overseas. It will tell because of its content and Australian style.

Would you like to see any overseas actors working in this country?

No.

But you are in flow of Australian actors and directors, give a verdict? How do you reconcile the two?

I don't think the Australian continental overseas is really any threat to the American or British film.

1. Enigma was the film-makers' first choice for the role of Jessica in Anne's Coming Out. Is the Equity unfair?



Choosing Angela Punch McGregor and Peter Cellier. *Enigma* is from Kenneth's Double Deal.

industry. If we import a lot of overseas actors into our country it is a threat because of numbers more than anything.

Finally, what has been your favorite role?

Jessica in *Anne's Coming Out*. It is my best performance so far and the most interesting.

Filmography

- 1970 *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*
- 1971 *Newfound*
- 1972 *The Island*
- 1973 *The Stranger*
- 1973 *Best of Friends*
- 1973 *We of the Never Never*
- 1974 *Double Deal*
- 1974 *Anne's Coming Out* ★

Jane Campion

Continued from p. 435

anyone who was going to feel like that. She ended up with a consolation part instead.

There is a very unexpected humor in *B. A. P.* All of a sudden it takes these lovely discussions. What role has been absorbing as social custom becomes very baroque...

Yes, I am a great depressor!

Why did the characters with misanthropic misanthropic stuff is a visual way on film rather than by your writing it down?

I come from a certain background, in an area where my father is a theatre director and my mother is an actress. It is unbearable to go and do exactly what your parents did, so I avoided it for a long time. But I have always been interested in acting, always read a lot of scripts and plays at home to myself, and all ways close to the theatre and thought about performance. So I knew a bit about performance and film was probably my favorite medium anyway. I am also a girl and I thought that if very clever, ambitious boys do this stuff, then why shouldn't girls? It sounds cheap, but I really did think like that.

I had a very low opinion of what sort of career potential I had as a person, anyway. The idea that I had never admitted to myself was suddenly now finding a husband whom I suspected and whose wife I thought was wonderful. Until I went to art school in Sydney, I was uneducated, mostly because I was confused about a woman's role. I am quite divorced now but it has made me very sympathetic to women who are still looking for a career. I can understand being in that situation.

When did you realize that that was a problem?

When all my boyfriends ran out. There was nobody and I was by myself. I realized I could no longer simply appeal to someone else and be put there as an attachment. So I said, "Okay, I'll have a go myself." And I suddenly felt this incredible new interest in life and this great excitement. I was going to do it with my own hands. I was going to dare to put myself on the line. I started doing these crude, paragonistic paintings, kind of funny as well as being pretty awful, but nobody told me off. I was working like a demon 12 hours a day and slowly they became more sophisticated. But it really was the first raw gesture, the first idea that I was starting to say anything. I felt like saying, "And once I got the work done, I began to see my

potential. I started to give it a chance and it became really exciting. And it has been hard to stop working ever since.

Do you want to continue writing?

Not particularly. I like it if I have an idea I am excited by, but I find it difficult. I have a lot of ideas but it is a real art to turn those ideas out well. I have to see things done badly. I worked with Gerard on *Passions Moments*. The tone of that is much more sophisticated than anything I have written.

Did he write and you direct?

We thought up most of the scenes together and he wrote the narrative. We thought it was important that only one person wrote it, to maintain the tone. We actually directed it together. It was a simple, little collaborative film to make, with five or six people in the crew.

How important is audience reaction to you?

I find the audience terrifying, actually! It is the making of the film that is important, the feeling that I have pulled it through and I am satisfied with it. I figure I am harder than most people to satisfy. If I think I have done as good a job as I can, that is my satisfaction. I

hope an audience gets something out of it; everybody does, but I can't control it. If people see the film and like it, I feel grateful, but in a way I wish it weren't up there and I could just go on and make the next film.

Your films have already had theatrical distribution...

Yes, through the Dwyer Cinema in Sydney. Barbara Greenough has been very supportive. It is very encouraging to think that an independent exhibitor like her takes the trouble to support short films when there is really nothing in it for her economically.

What are the other films you want to do?

The idea I would like to do next has to do with everything I feel about being a New Zealander in New Zealand and being as expatriate New Zealander going back. It has to do with commitment and why families are separated, and with the first bad or dishonest moves on terms of the setting of New Zealand which has never been acknowledged. I will probably be working with John Murnah, who produced *Wiglit*. I want to keep living adventures. I am really only ambitious as far as the material. I would like to think that that will one day be a feature, but who knows. ★

We of the Never Never

Continued from p. 424

Jessie, who is tossed out after many hours of riding in the wake of the misters from early morning till the pattering beat of midday. She dismounts and steps to rest beneath the shade of a tree. An enraged bull bawls out of the scrub. It passes at the edge of the clearing, forcing Jessie, pivoting the ground and throwing up dust in its anger. Jessie notices the danger and calls out: "Kimmel! Get on your horse!" She looks up, jumps to her feet, but two panicked monstrous, lightning blue horses sweep. The only thing she can do is to try to climb the tree. The bull charges. A rifle shot rings out and the horse collapses in its tracks. Jack quickly reloads his lever-action Winchester and fires again. The bull falls over and the camera focuses on the dead animal as its reared-up feet kick slowly and jerkily release, in the final phase of death, Jessie's ass. Jack, glancing slightly over his left shoulder, looks in her direction with an air of triumphant mastery. Then he turns away to smother his rifle in the saddle bag.

There is a classical contrast here to the sequence which is elemental in its simplicity. However, a question remains: what can be done to integrate the drama of these shots into the narrative style of the film, which is not purely tense and dramatic? The problem is solved very neatly, in fact, because the next sequence shows an Aboriginal stockman mockingly re-enacting the whole incident to the great amusement of the camp lubras and the white station hands. Even Jessie cannot keep a serious face. Jessie, by her discomfort at being made the butt of their derisive jokes, real-

ises to her, flings herself on to a camp stretcher and berates those men.

What could be the reason for her tirade outburst? All the evidence the audience has been given about Jessie's character suggests that she should have been able to keep control in these circumstances. There are many instances in the early part of the film which illustrate her ability to cope or, at least, to pull a brave face on things. One has seen how calmly she faces rough old Mac (Tony Barry), the Bullocky, in their first meeting when he is determined to tell her she won't be wanted. One has noted how quickly she manages to adjust to the weird circumstances of the breeding duty to the Ferguson River and then, after the ducking in the flooded river, without any start or sulky looks, she is able to take good humouredly about the experience. The disappointment of the homesteading to a director homeland does not produce any great emotional outburst, despite the valiant plot to her arrest when a dose of unsympathetic falls off its hinges at her recent lonely Bush trials communications at the Elsey are further exacerbated by the Aboriginal words who desert their jobs, leaving Jessie to struggle by herself to clear the house and make it livable.

The evidence continues to pile up to support Jessie's strength of character. And so, the question about her burst of tears following the incident with the bull becomes significant. There can only be one answer, especially if one remembers the three people involved, and the Ongulid triangle that binds them together. Jessie's outburst of weeping can only be a manifestation of hysteria. With this prognosis of tears, one is confronted by the possibility of a woman corrupted by the Ongulid web, caught between her husband Arnon and Jack, the latter fulfilling the function of a symbolic son.

The hysterical outburst is precipitated because she is forbidden to speak the language of her desire which is directed to the son, that is the force of the Ongulid (identification on the woman). And yet, her forbidden desire is there as a subconscious diagnosis, within the veiled meaning of her conscious speech. "I might have got you killed", Jessie waits at Arnon's knee to comfort her in the text. "Good, I love you. I want to be a good wife." What is so the diagnosis about this statement? The meaning behind the veil becomes obvious after a woman's reflection.

Quite simply, Jessie went Arnon to do. Jessie's hysteria subsequently opens up the text of the film to an interpretation at the level of arrested sensuality. The apparatus operates across both cultures represented in the film. The audience knows something about Aboriginal sexuality among the tribes of the Ross River district, very close to the Elsey Station, from the evidence of documented contemporary practices. A whole cycle of songs, performed as part of a fertility rite in a ceremony of ritual defecation and submission, has been recorded by R. M. Berndt in his book, *Love Songs of Arnhem Land*. The ceremony is said to have involved copulation between partners whose union normally is forbidden by strict taboos. Therefore, the Ongulid interdicts, imposed as an absolute law on whites and blacks alike, becomes more than a rural repression. In its wider dimension, it becomes political, and encompasses the oppression and exploitation of the station Aboriginals by the whites at Elsey. This theme, in its raw violence, obviously would be difficult for the commercial cinema. It is a pity, however, that a film such as *We of the Never Never*, which uses an oblique narrative style so masterfully in some of its best moments, was unable to approach the reality of the situation a little more closely. *



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Kathy Mueller

Continued from p. 437

film where real people were living out dramas which were living deaths. I said to her, "If ever I get the chance, I will make a film about your life, provided you trust me enough." I thought it would take me years to get my craft together to make a film about her.

The following year, I went to Swinburne and I realized that if ever I were to get my ticket in the industry I would have to make something with impact. So, I thought, bigger is, I wonder if I should try and do it. I asked her if I could do a half-hour version, and she agreed. I spent a lot of time talking and going out in the middle of the night, till dawn the morning, with guys who were on the verge of suicide. I would go home so depressed that I couldn't go to school. I sat there, writing about it.

What was your reaction to the script you had to "Every Day, Every Night"?

An international jury voted it the Best Short at the Montreal Film Festival. That was an honor because it meant that the film was not only relevant to Australia, but also recognized internationally. The film became important, rather than my film, because my film would be forgotten if the same hadn't been there.

I have always believed that content dictates form. I would probably never make a film like *Every Day, Every Night* again because the content dictated the way it was made. If people expect me to make another *Every Day, Every Night*, they'll be badly mistaken, because I can't.

Why did you decide to go to Swinburne rather than continue to write and get funding for a film?

Because I wanted to direct it, and before you can direct your own feature you have to have some

experience. One day I will finish writing it and direct it. But I have to get my craft together to do that.

Is that what Swinburne did for you?

Swinburne was a chance for me to find out what I had to offer and find out if I could express myself in film. I realized that film is my medium. I am not articulate verbally, but there is something about the combination of image and sound which expresses how I feel.

So what did Swinburne teach you?

What does any institution teach you? I threw this back only because I left an institution not ever wanting to go to another institution again. I was coming at the VCA and I had been a student there, I had seen the crisis that creative people go through in an institution. An institution for creativity is a paradox. If you stay long enough in an institution, any kind of institution, you can lose touch with your instincts because you are so busy trying to learn from "experts." I don't believe in experts, though I believe there are people who can inspire you along the way.

So, in terms of what an institution or what Swinburne as an institution can teach you, it teaches you to rely on yourself. It teaches you to plan a brief, because nobody else is going to plan it for you. For instance, I knew Swinburne has massive problems. It is not other people; they sit not getting any money and their equipment is faulty. So, I had to plan to get outside equipment. The point gave me the chance to get a bit of money to do the film and encouragement along the way by the staff. They let me do what I wanted, which is what a creative person has to do, but often the teacher-student relationship doesn't allow you to do that. And a lot of people who go to Swinburne just don't make it because they expect to sit there and have someone do it for them.

Did you see that a lot?



Spoke later to be put out of the misery of rage and despair and who: You do show him *Every Day, Every Night*

Not now, because I was too busy doing my own thing. But people have come to me since and said, "Oh, you were last year at Swinburne. How did you manage?" "Look, I think it was a bad course", and I'd ask "Why?" They would say, "The staff don't have time to listen" and I ask "Well, have you written your script?" Do you know what you want?" And then other people don't know. For the people who do, the biggest headache is the equipment falling apart. I found that outrageous.

It would be great if there were better equipment, although it is sad that many make people think I don't think it would. If Swinburne had equipment, it would be a fantastic place.

A lot of people have said that a lack of resources forces Swinburne students to be more experimental, more innovative. And that an overabundance is part of the problem of the film coming out of the Australian Film and Television School . . .

Yes, there is too much gloss.

Well, they are all very technically adept because they don't have to scrimp around and improvise. But they are lacking in terms of creativity . . .

That is possible. But for some people a three-year course is Sydney is the best thing for them. It would probably be the worst thing for me in terms of my art, my desires and my sense of independence and freedom. I know I could never fit into that structure, and it would kill me, I would eventually come home there if I tried to get my way.

The barrier and the rivalry between the two film schools is crazy because both are needed. The fact that they are so different is important. And comparing any two institutions, in terms of what they teach you, is dangerous. The people coming out from a three-year course in Sydney are probably better equipped in terms of the assets they know about. But it takes a lifetime to learn it fully.

The only thing I think that should be right is the difference in the standard of equipment. It doesn't mean that everything at Swinburne has to be brand spanking new, but even as being able to buy more, second-hand equipment would help.

Can you say something about "Everyday", the left-behind you are doing for the ABC?

It is about a rebel fighting back against a victim who says, "I'm not going to be a victim. I'm going to win." When the victim defies and overthrows the oppressors and becomes winners, then you cele-

brate life. After having made *Every Day, Every Night* and that being accepted, despite its bleakness, I felt I could celebrate life.

There is also a bit of black comedy, which is great. It is gutsy and basically it allows us to direct actors. I think it can be that very simply.

Do you think directing actors is your forte?

At the moment that is my strength because that is what I know, I could be totally wrong by the time I finish, but I sense that by encouraging people to be mischievous or play up the part, they then realize they can explore it further. You get a real excitement going and it keeps out on the screen.

How have you coped with working in the structure of the ABC?

I took it slowly because I was very afraid of stepping on toes, of coming in green and wanting to take over. A director is used to be in control but you have to know what you are dealing with. And the main thing is just taking each other slower to a cent-to-cent basis, talking through things. Everyone has been very receptive.

Did the ABC come to you and ask you to look at the script or did you go to the ABC?

Years ago I gave them a copy of the outline of a feature I wanted to direct, and Chris Muir, David of ABC Television Drama, may have remembered me from then. Then when I was up in Sydney for the QAO awards I ran into Chris. He came down to see my film, and we chatted. I said, "It'll probably be a couple of years before I get my script together but it would be nice to direct something at the ABC." Then, a couple of months later, there was a phone call from the ABC and they wanted me to go and read a script, which was *Everyday*. I had a chat with the producer, and he seemed happy with the way I was talking about what the script means and how I would like to handle it. Two weeks later he rang and said, "We would like you to direct the script." It was great because I felt very strongly about it, and I don't think you can do much work unless you feel strongly about something.

My biggest reservation I suppose was that I got work immediately after coming out of Swinburne and other people don't. But I wouldn't have accepted a job at the ABC if I didn't think I could do it, if I didn't think I could make something of the script. It is the excitement of simply looking at a screen, its watching a screen say, "I'm not going to be a victim." It's about the gap between the victim and the winner. That is exciting for me. ★

Alain Renais

Continued from p. 189

wouldn't leave the light in which the characters might have lived. The photography is the real poetry—by the chance the real church, Benoit's house is an reality about as far from Liria.

The landscape is very beautiful, very sincere . . .

Yes, there are a lot of rocks . . .

Stance is the dominant manner in the film . . .

Yes.

At what moment during the preparation of the film did you decide on the location?

I always try to find the actors and the locations as early as possible. As soon as there is the embryo of a scenario I try, with the director, to choose the actors so that the dialogue will be written knowing who is going to speak them. Then I set off with Florence Malraux¹ to look for locations. I bring back as many photos as possible to the scenario so that he can write what the places in mind. I find it more amusing to do it this way.

How did you work with the actors?

I always enjoy asking the scenario to write or describe what has happened so the characters during their lives and the moment they appear on the screen, from their birth onwards. That gives us a basis for discussion with the actors for a large part of the dialogue.

I only do this with actors who like to work this way. There are actors who say, "I don't want to work anything. I just want to work within myself, privately." With these actors I work differently. But there are actors who want to talk about the motivations of their characters. We try to bring them on sentence by sentence, movement by movement, always seeking agreement, so that every point becomes clear. I think that is what all directors do; there is nothing special about it.

I like to talk with my actors a month or two before shooting, especially to see what lines might give them trouble, to clarify it that as quickly as possible, often taking into account their observations and re-writing with the scenario when I feel the need to do so. It is a little like choosing the roles to fit the actors.

How did the actors feel about their roles in "L'homme à l'arc"?

I will answer a little indirectly by saying that all four were obviously extremely understood by the scenario and by their roles since they made the film as co-producers. They put their hearts into the film. So we are all bound to its success or failure. What is more, to do the film they released other roles which were certainly more advantageous from a financial point of view. It was a sacrifice for them but one they seemed to make with joy.

So you had difficulty in financing the film?

It was very difficult. But Claude Labrousse, who was head of Segre Films, was interested in the project and at the outset showed a lot of energy. He managed to get together the necessary 11 million francs, thanks also to producer Philippe Desautel, who really liked the scenario and associated himself with the venture.

But it is very difficult to make a film in France these days for the simple reason — undoubtedly the same in most countries — that the prodigious costs of a film follow inflation. So, in France, they go up

at a rate of 15 per cent a year, in two years 30 per cent, in three years 45 per cent. But the price of a ticket cannot follow. If that price had followed the inflation curve, seeing a film in France today would cost from 60 to 100 francs, and nobody would go to the cinema anymore.

Every year the "bottleneck" is getting narrower and we have to make cheaper and cheaper films in order to have a chance of recovering the initial investment.

You received a substantial subsidy . . .

Yes, I got the average *avance sur recettes* (advance on takings) and, this time, the *fonds de soutien* (special assistance fund). This money, however, is not an outright grant; you have to pay it back.

The advantage of the advance is that it is fresh money from the state. And, in the case of financial disaster, you are not pursued by banks to make you pay it back.

Since it is money taken out of box-office sales, a percentage off each ticket, it is considered that it

should go back into the cinema, to make a gap, to encourage production of films that might be thought of as "national". Producers, in fact the entire cinematographic profession, think that it is a good thing, that it makes it possible for the French cinema to move. There is also the perspective, from the State point of view, that films which are expected, even if they are commercial failures in themselves, undoubtedly encourage the sale of other French products abroad. It is a kind of advertising campaign for the nation.

How did you conceive of the use of the empty screen, sometimes invaded by floating white particles, the only "image" to accompany the music?

I tried to find the image which would distract the spectator least from the music.

The problem was how to leave the spectator as receptive as possible to the music, to follow it as he would the dramatic action. A black screen would have sufficed for the problem with black is that it is immediately associated with a technical breakdown. So my first preoccupation was to find a way of staying to the spectator. "No, no. The film is continuing, stay in your seats and try to listen to the music."

We thought of the floating particles as a way of making a non-figurative image. In no way has it a symbolic sense. It is there just so there is something on the screen.

It is not an image of thinking?

Not at all . . . though you could perhaps think of that.

Just last week I was amazed to read a critical analysis of Schoenberg's "Trau", which I mentioned earlier. It had been written well before the film though I hadn't read it. It talks about that music evoking the idea of particles in movement, I think it even said "divinity particles". That goes to show that certain music, certain experiences, sometimes lead to the same mental images.

In any case, there was no expressly intended symbolism. And as the film goes along, the spectator gets used to the rhythm, the musical interventions, and I tried to put in fewer and fewer floating particles. There are moments of total blackness, or should I say dark bluish greyness.

Do you know how audiences have reacted to the structure of the film?

In these ways that I can distinguish.

There is a category of spectators who are disconnected by the first musical interventions but, from about the third one, start to feel the progression of the music from



Julien in "L'homme à l'arc". "I thought that perhaps we could make a sort of 'Schubert' film, with just faces, very little dialogue and in which the music would contain the action and dialogue."

1 Florence Malraux has been assistant director on most of Renais' films since 1961.



¹ Distorted and limited are not acceptable images. . . . They are not merely "typical" but neither are they good realistic depictions. That was what impressed me, to show that anyone can tell one's disease. I know it now.

From a dramatic point of view, the way in which the music amplifies and connects Elizabeth's anguish and Simon's 'veritas' because the music is very constructed. These spectators participate much more violently because of the music. For them, the musical interventions are not felt as interruptions, rather as interludes, preludes or postludes. The contrast between the acoustic and the music is felt and understood. I have received letters and telephone calls from these people who declare themselves to be quite overwhelmed by the music.

A second category fear, at first, that the medical interventions are going to be systematic and then they start to find these segments very real. They can recall the scene they have just seen and ponder over it — a very pleasurable experience. The interventions become essential to their viewing of the film, moving and, at the same time, real.

Then there is a third category who say, "Oh, what a good film it would be if it weren't for the deafening, cacophonous, gratuitous and" — the abuse which gave me the greatest pleasure in the newspaper — "contemporary music." This category refuses completely the construction of the film.

Obviously, I tend to meet people who liked the film. I have received 80 per cent favorable reactions, 20 per cent very hostile.

And the critics' reactions?

The artist hasn't spoken much about the movie.

A lot of critical thought — an inevitable misunderstanding as one rarely sees films considered in this way — that it was the image of the empty screen that I was concerned in and that I had used the word

the "jean", the "welded jean" with — the music. We had decided on this at the writing stage and while we were filming we were always aware of where the "cuts" would be made. Of course, this modified the actors' behavior, their actions.

I saw the film without the music and that produced a kind of emptiness. The actors were playing as in an opera company. We often thought about the scenario as a kind of libretto even though it would not be sung. But we were completely involved in the idea of making a musical film without songs. This obviously influenced the acting, the movements and, of course, the music.

And the way in which the distances were written . . .

Of course. With Graciah we tried to write dialogues in which we eliminated a lot of adjectives, a lot of lyricalism, so that they would not have a pleonastic relation with the music. If we had had very literary, ornate dialogues the music would have become a pleonasm. So we tried to be rather sparing with words.

I don't mean to say that we have succeeded in all this. That would be pretentious. I am just trying to answer your questions by explaining what we tried to do, what directions we wanted to take.

One would think that you have succeeded...

We will see. I know I have succeeded for the people who have written to me.

That is the problem with the cinema. When does success begin? If you are a writer you have succeeded with five to 10 thousand copies sold. If you are — and this is a more pertinent comparison — a man of the theatre, a playwright, then 300,000 spectators is an extraordinary triumph. But for us, even with one million or two million spectators, we haven't yet succeeded. Where does it start?

I want for 400,000 to two million earnings. I specify that they are not necessarily French. In fact, I am a filmmaker who depends on the release of my films overseas. A world-wide public is essential to my being able to continue. I can't say that I am unhappy, ignored or misunderstood, because the audience is enormous. But I also recognize that for a filmmaker two million spectators is nothing, nothing at all.

You never know how things are going to turn out until the film is released. It is always a big question mark. You know in choosing this profession that it won't be easy. Sometimes you receive flowers but there are also a lot of scowls. You have to be prepared for both and please, otherwise you might as well have gone into selling hats! I don't know why we say that — selling hats can't be very easy — but that is the expression we use in the entertainment business.

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